

THE SETTLEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM CAMBODIA IN NEW SOUTH WALES



1975-79

1980-89

1990-99

2000-08



**Development of Cambodian organisations
1975-2008**

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Project of the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc.

Written and researched by

Por Heang Ya

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INTRODUCTION

Refugees represent a large proportion of the Cambodian Australian population. The majority of them arrived in Australia after 1975, as the result of the genocide of the Pol Pot Regime, and subsequent political instability in Cambodia.

In New South Wales, over 30 years, Cambodian refugees have not only successfully established themselves, but have also contributed to the socio-economic development of the Australian community in many different ways. Their success can be attributed to the efforts of the early settlers who have tirelessly devoted their time, skills and resources to the leadership of various Cambodian organisations, while at the same time working hard to support their own families. With the passage of time, it is believed that these leaders may be forgotten by new generations. The Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc. has accordingly initiated this project to gather data relating to the establishment and achievements of Cambodian organisations in NSW over the past 30 years. This documentation will be a valuable resource for future generations. This project commenced in June 2008 and produced this document in October 2008.

The resources used are partly owned by the writer, who for the past 25 years has been involved in providing services to the Cambodian community in Sydney in various roles and capacities. These include Khmer Health Worker; Khmer

Interpreter; District Officer (Bi-lingual); Manager, Casework; General Secretary of the Khmer Community in NSW Inc. KCNSW, (1986); Convener and Chairperson of Khmer Interagency (1983-94); and President of KCNSW (1994-98). Other information is based on the Annual Reports of KCNSW (1995-2007), KI and CAWC (1994-2007), KYA Website, and personal interviews with past and current Presidents of each organisation.

The writer would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals who have provided their time and resources to make this collection possible. Special thanks to CAWC's Board of Directors, including Tek Heang Ya, Andrew Chong-Hean Ang and Nola Randall-Mohk, and to my daughter Dany Ya for providing direction on the presentation, layout and design. Many thanks also to Diana Giese, a long-time friend of the Khmer community, for editing this document.

Por Heang Ya

Sydney 2008

PART 1

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CAMBODIAN ORGANISATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

1978 – 2004

CAMBODIAN ORGANISATION	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	OBJECTIVES
KHMER COMMUNITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES Inc. (KCNSW) <i>Current President:</i> Daniel Lee <i>Office:</i> 26 Bonnyrigg Ave, Bonnyrigg NSW 2177 <i>Tel:</i> 02 9823 3479	1978 The first Cambodian organisation in NSW 1986 KCNSW incorporated	To provide settlement support to newly-arrived refugees, and with a major role in promoting and preserving Cambodian culture
CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW Inc. (KHMER INTERAGENCY) (CAWC/ KI) <i>Current President:</i> Tek Heang Ya <i>Office:</i> 211 Humphries Rd, Bonnyrigg NSW 2177 <i>Tel:</i> 02 8786 2581 www.cambodianwelfare.org.au	1983 Information sharing forum for those working with Cambodian clients, was first called Khmer Interagency (KI) 1996 KI incorporated 1999 KI changed its name to CAWC	Since its inception KI/CAWC has played an important role in advocating for better services for the Cambodian community in NSW and harmonising relationships within the Cambodian community and with the wider Australian community
CAMBODIAN BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF NSW Inc. (CBS) Wat Khemarangsaram <i>Current President:</i> Kim Hor Lim <i>Abbot:</i> Venerable Long Sakhon	1984 Sub-Committee of KCNSW Inc. 1988 CBS incorporated	Since its establishment the CBS has played a major role in fulfilling the religious needs of the Cambodian community in NSW by organising religious activities in accordance with the Buddhist calendar

<p>Office: 68 Tarlington Parade, Bonnyrigg NSW 2177</p> <p>Tel: 02 9823 6404</p>		
<p>KHMER YOUTH ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc. (KYA)</p> <p><i>Current President:</i> Sothea Loeth</p>	<p>1984 Association affiliated with KCNSW</p> <p>1995 KYA became incorporated and operated as an independent body</p>	<p>KYA focuses on strengthening relationships among Cambodian young people through social and cultural activities and functions</p>
<p>BONNYRIGG KHMER LANGUAGE SCHOOL</p> <p><i>Current Director:</i> Sorathy Michell</p> <p>Tel: 02 9610 4870</p>	<p>1991 School Committee was established to conduct classes in Khmer language and culture each Sunday during school terms at Bonnyrigg Public School</p>	<p>Since its establishment the school has been successful in developing teaching programs for primary and secondary students in both Khmer literacy and culture</p>
<p>SALVATION & CAMBODIAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc. Wat Dharmasamaki</p> <p><i>Current President:</i> Lychantha Sok</p> <p><i>Centre:</i> 1 Stuart St, Canley Vale NSW 2166</p> <p>Tel: 02 9723 5834</p>	<p>1995 Rented a three-bedroom house on Longfield St, Cabramatta as a temporary place to practice Buddhism</p> <p>2000 A permanent centre at 1 Stuart St, Canley Vale and a hall built for religious practice and the permanent office of this Association</p>	<p>Provides an alternative venue for the Buddhist religious practices of the Cambodian community</p>
<p>KAMPUCHEA KROM CULTURAL CENTRE OF NSW Inc. Wat Ratanaram</p> <p><i>Current President:</i> Siv Reach</p> <p><i>Abbott:</i> Venerable Yang Thy</p> <p><i>Centre:</i> 114 Broomfield St Cabramatta NSW 2166</p> <p>Tel: 02 9725 7035</p>	<p>1995 Established as a centre for preservation and promotion of the cultural traditions of Cambodians born in former Khmer lands in South Vietnam</p>	<p>Provides an alternative venue for the Buddhist religious practices of Cambodians living within the Cabramatta-Canley Vale area, particularly for Cambodian people originally from South Vietnam</p>

AUSTRALIAN CAMBODIAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION <i>Current President:</i> Boran Huot <i>Contact:</i> 65 Mulligan St, Bossley Park 2176 <i>Tel:</i> 0414 915 065	1995 Association was established	Provides mutual support for Cambodian market gardeners and farmers, on technical support, pesticide regulations and other practical matters
KHMER KROM AUSTRALIAN BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc Wat Kettanak Khmer Kampuchea Krom <i>Current President:</i> Tha Lim <i>Abbott:</i> Venerable Samnang Chey <i>Centre:</i> 42 Wynyard Ave, Rossmore NSW 2171 <i>Tel:</i> 02 9606 7967	1996 Association established a temporary residence for a monk in Fairfield West	Provides an alternative venue for Buddhist religious practices, particularly for Cambodian people originally from South Vietnam as well as the general community
AUSTRALIAN CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY Inc. <i>Current President:</i> Sovannairand Kay <i>Contact:</i> 971 Cobbitty Rd, Narellan NSW 2567	2004 Established as a means of support for the Australian–Cambodian community, the aim of the Association is to preserve and promote Cambodian culture relating to Khmer youth activities	For the last three years this Association has been involved in organising fun nights out and activities for the community including a Cambodian singing contest and Miss Cambodian Beauty Contest

PART 2

CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF CAMBODIAN ORGANISATIONS IN NSW

1. KHMER COMMUNITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES Inc. (KCNSW)

1977

The Khmer Community of New South Wales (KCNSW) was established in November. Seang Lay Siv was appointed as President until a proper election could be held.

Dr Kem Kang was elected President. This was the first Khmer association established in New South Wales, founded by a group of students and trainees who had been granted permanent residency in Australia after the fall of Cambodia in 1975.

KCNSW's aim was to provide mutual support for its members and advocate to the Australian government on the plight of the Khmer refugees in Thailand.

The Management Committee consisted of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary with an Assistant Secretary, and a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The term of office was one year. The Management Committee was supported by Sub-Committees. In 1979 there were three of these; for Khmer New Year Celebrations, for the KCNSW Newsletter, and for the Promotion and Preservation of Khmer Culture.

1978

Bun Ang Neak was elected President but resigned a few months later. Dr Kem Kang held this position until the end of the term.

On 12 April, KCNSW was registered as a charitable organisation under the provision of the *Charitable Collections Act 1934-41*.

1979

Por Seng Lay was elected President for three consecutive terms from 1979 (until 1982).

During the first four years of its existence the KC NSW did not have a proper office. The majority of the meetings and celebrations were held at a private house and in the community hall.

1982

Sokhan Yim was elected President.

Participation in the yearly festival, Carnivale 82, with an Exhibition of Kampuchea Arts at the Domain was very successful. It was the first time the Australian public had the opportunity to see and appreciate our culture.

On October 26, a request was made to the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Malcolm Fraser, to increase the intake of Cambodian refugees from the camps in Thailand. Desperate appeals for help had been received from Cambodian relatives and Australian aid workers inside the camps telling us that the Thai National Security had threatened to forcibly repatriate the refugees to Kampuchea if no third country accepted them for resettlement.

KCNSW sponsored 40 Cambodian refugee families from Thailand.

Establishment of the Community Centre at 1/115 The Crescent, Fairfield.

A Welfare Worker was employed with Grant-In-Aid (GIA) funding from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, to provide settlement services for newly-arrived Cambodian refugees.

1983

KCNSW sponsored the late Venerable Dr Moha Yao from the USA for an Australian Dharma tour, from 14 February - 31 March.

In March a temporary Temple was set up by the nuns at 65 Anthony Street, Fairfield.

Khmer Interagency (which became CAWC) was formed.

1984

Sakun Keat was elected President but left for Canberra a few months later to join the KNLFF (Khmer National Liberation Front *aka* Son Sann's Front). Pon Ou, his Vice-President, acted as President until the end of the term.

A Buddhist Sub-Committee was formed under the KCNSW and Sokhan Yim was appointed as President. An application was made to the State Government to lease a block of land at Bonnyrigg for community use as a Community Centre and Buddhist Temple

Another application was lodged with the Department of Immigration to sponsor Khmer monks from Thailand.

\$13,000 Grant was received from the Ethnic Affairs Commission for Culture and Arts.

Khmer refugee intake for Australia peaked at 4400.

1985

In September, Meng Lim Sorn was elected as President, but resigned a few months later.

Vice-President Bunna Thei was Acting President until the end of the term.

First Buddhist Monk, Venerable Sakhon Long from Thailand, was sponsored by KCNSW and arrived in Sydney to lead religious activities from the temporary temple at Anthony Street, Fairfield.

One-year funding from the Ethnic Affairs Commission was granted for a worker to deal with the elderly.

The total number of Khmer orphans from Khao I Dang Refugee Camp, Thailand, who had been sponsored by UnitingCare Burnside Sydney since 1983, was 28. The group was cared for by Burnside and monitored by DOCS and DIMA.

1986

Vuthy Chamron was elected President, with Por Heang Ya as General Secretary.

1987

The KCNSW became incorporated. The term of the office bearers was changed from one to two years.

Premier of NSW Neville Wran granted the lease of a block of land at the corner of Tarlington Parade and Bonnyrigg Avenue, to the KCNSW for the building of a Community Centre and the Buddhist Temple. On 25 May 1987, a 60-year lease commenced (terminating 24 May 2047). It was signed between the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and the KCNSW.

\$90,000 grant under the Commonwealth Employment Program (CEP) funded by the Federal Government to build a car park at the Centre.

The construction of a multipurpose Hall commenced on this site, with community donations matched with a \$125,000 grant from Bicentennial Grants Program.



1987 MP Mrs. Janice Crosio, representing the Premier of NSW, handed over the block of land in Bonnyrigg to KCNSW

1988

Sath Srey was elected President.

The construction of the multipurpose Hall was completed, at a total cost of \$250,318. Building of the KCNSW Office cost \$79,000.



Multipurpose Hall built in 1988.

The Head Office of KCNSW was relocated to its newly-built place in the present location in Bonnyrigg, at the corner of Bonnyrigg Ave and Tarlington Parade, in the same compound as the Buddhist monastery, Wat Khemarangsaram.



Khmer Community Office in Bonnyrigg

1989

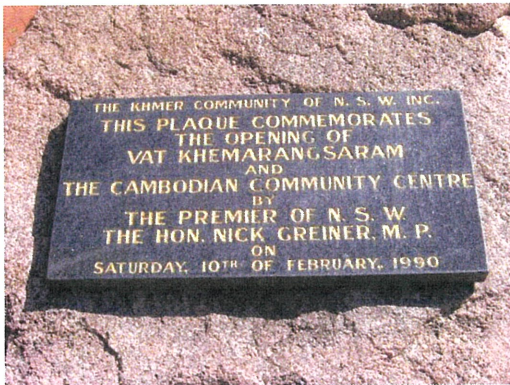
Building of the two-story Monks' Residence cost \$108,486, with \$57,886 donation from the Chinese Cambodian Association and the rest donated by the community.

Building fences around the Centre cost \$82,019.

A loan of \$60,000 was taken out with the Commonwealth Bank to complete the entire project. The loan was fully paid off.

1990

On 10 February the Official Opening of the Khmer Community Centre and the Hall was performed by NSW Premier Nick Greiner.



The plaque commemorates the opening of Wat Khemarangsaram and the Khmer Community Centre by the Premier of NSW the Hon. Nick Greiner on Saturday 10 February 1990.

In July, Saing Heang Seng was elected as President.

DIMA's grant increased from one GIA worker to two. This was to provide casework and community development for families, women, children, youth and the elderly. Service extended to Campbelltown for two days per week.

HELP project was established to assist High School students with schoolwork outside school hours.

The Cambodian Buddhist Society was set up to cater for the religious needs of the Khmer people.

1992

In July, Bunna Thei was elected President.

1993

KCNSW Office was extended to create more space for services, with catering facilities downstairs. Saing Heang continued to supervise this project until its completion.

1994

On 24 July, Por Heang Ya was elected President.

Close co-operation was established between the Cambodian Buddhist Society (CBS) and KCNSW, with clear lines of accountability established between the two organisations: KBS to look after religious activities and KCNSW to oversee all social welfare needs of all Cambodians in NSW.

A joint Temple Project Committee was formed to oversee the building of the Temple, with Lim Ngien Sour as President. Application to build was lodged at Fairfield City Council.

The KCNSW Office was refurbished to provide an appropriate working environment for the health and safety of workers and their clients. Tiling and air-conditioning were installed, with new office equipment. The Office extended its services to Cabramatta Community Centre and Campbelltown for two days a week each, with five days in Bonnyrigg.

1995

KCNSW received a grant of \$50,000 from the State Government through the Ethnic

Affairs Commission, towards the building of the Temple.

In April, the foundation stone was laid on the site where the Buddha was to be located in the Temple.

Following representations made by the KCNSW, the NSW Department of Education approved the introduction of the Khmer language as an accredited HSC subject. The Saturday School of Community Language was opened for Khmer students at Liverpool Girls' High School. The KCNSW attributes this success to the hard work of Michael Michell, Senior Education Officer, Multicultural Education Unit and his wife Sorathy Michell, both valuable members of our community, who gave unstintingly of their time and expertise.

1996

Por Heang Ya was re-elected as President of KCNSW for another term.

From 1-2 November, \$39,720 was raised to help flood victims in Cambodia through two fundraising events at the Temple in Bonnyrigg and in Cabramatta. It was great to see in times like this how Cambodians disregarded their racial origins and political affiliations, and joined together to help their compatriots in their homeland.



Cambodians dancing at the fund raising event in Cabramatta



Mr. Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration addresses the audience at a fundraising event to help flood victims in Cambodia with KCNSW President Por Heang Ya

1997

On March 15, Cambodian Seniors' Day was held for the second time since 1996 at the Temple in Bonnyrigg. This day is for paying respect and expressing gratitude to the Cambodian elderly. This event was organised by members of the Women Affairs Committee led by Mrs Tek Heang Ya.



Khmer Seniors' Day, with one of the Buddhist monks blessing the Khmer elders with holy water.

1998

In March, the Temple building was completed, at the cost of almost \$1 million. Apart from a \$50,000 grant from the State Government, the costs of the project were entirely covered by community donations. Work on the Temple was facilitated by the Project Committee, the Cambodian Buddhist Society, the Monks and many community volunteers.

The newly-built temple was officially opened on 15 March, through a religious ritual called the Sema Cutting Ceremony, in the presence of His Excellency Gordon Samuels, the Governor of New South Wales and the Hon. Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.



NSW Governor His Excellency Gordon Samuels at the Sema Ceremony



Mr Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration during the Sema Ceremony

The Ceremony lasted for 4 days, from 13-16 March. This was the first Cambodian Buddhist Temple built in Sydney, and the first in Australia. Cambodians from every state joined in the celebrations. It was an historic event marking a major achievement by Cambodian refugees in NSW. It was the result of close co-operation between the KCNSW and the CBS.



Sema celebration

On 23 May, Diana Giese convened *Up from Year Zero*, a presentation on the Cambodian Genocide Program by Dr Helen Jarvis and her team from the University of New South Wales. This was part of the *Reclaiming the Past* series (1996-2001) at the Museum of Sydney.

On 23 October, *Old and New Generations of Khmer Settling in NSW: Cambodian Profile*, jointly published by KCNSW and Ettinger House, was launched. A DIMA Grant had been provided to conduct this Community Profile and Needs Analysis.



1998 Launch of Community Profile
Mrs Nola Randall-Mohk, KCNSW General Secretary, Mr Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Por Heang Ya, KCNSW President, Mrs Tek Heang Ya, President, Sub-Committee for Women's Affairs, Chhayri Marm, CSS Worker.

In October, Sovannairand Kay was elected KCNSW President.



Sovannairand Kay with a musical instrument imported from Cambodia.

1999

Early in the year, almost \$5000 was raised to help orphans from Cambodia visiting Sydney.

In April, during Khmer New Year, a very successful night acknowledging ex-Presidents was held. Each past President was presented with a plaque to show gratitude for the hard voluntary work they had done.

On 29 May, 'Life lost, life found': *Khmer Australians* was held as part of Diana Giese's *Reclaiming the Past* series at the Museum of Sydney. Chong Hean Ang talked about Khmer people becoming 'a resilient and productive group', while Sorathy Pouk Michell told her own story: 'the victims of Pol Pot speak through the stories of survivors'.

Recording of interviews began for the *Khmer Community in Australia Oral History Project* with the National Library of Australia (see www.nla.gov.au) Interviews were recorded by Diana Giese (1999-2000) with community achievers including Por Heang Ya, Soour Hai Gov, Chanboramy Var, Chong Hean Ang, Sovannairand Kay and Sorathy Pouk Michell.

2000

Sovannairand Kay was re-elected KCNSW President.

On 27 May, Sovannairand Kay, Soour Hai Gov, Chanboramy Var, Chong Hean Ang and Sorathy Pouk Michell spoke at the Museum of Sydney about participating in the National Library's *Khmer Community in Australia Oral History Project*, as part of the *Reclaiming the Past* series. Copies of the tapes, also archived at the Library, were presented to the KCNSW.

'I Want to Have a Life'

Diana Giese introduces the latest Oral History recordings of the Khmer Community in Australia

Ramy Var and her younger sister arrived in Australia in 1983. They had nothing. But these Cambodian refugee orphans brought with them an invaluable legacy from their father, a history professor, killed by the Khmer Rouge. Says Ramy: 'He taught me that education was the only asset that could not be burnt or stolen.'

Ramy now works as coordinator for the Newly Arrived Refugees Program at Liverpool in western Sydney. She recruits, trains and supports bilingual educators, and plans, implements and evaluates their programs. Whether they come from Bosnia or South America, she finds many refugees have been 'emotionally, physically and psychologically affected' in ways similar to Khmers: 'loss of country, immediate family, escape, leaving people behind ... Australians think, "Why don't they go and learn English? Why don't they get a job?" They don't realise a lot of bad memories, a lot of flashbacks, a lot of things obstruct them, interfere with their minds.'

When she first arrived in Sydney, Ramy worked in factory jobs to support her sister and pay the rent. Australian friends encouraged her to move on. 'If you don't step out of the factory ... you'll remain there for the rest of your life,' they told her.



Ramy Var and her daughters, Vanessa and Malinda. Cambodian New Year 1997. Photograph courtesy of Ramy Var.

She is one of six achievers from Khmer Community in Australia who were interviewed recently for the National Library's Oral History Collection. Those recorded were nominated by others who knew how they had built successful lives, while contributing to the wider community.

Nairand Kay is the current President of the Khmer Community in New South Wales. Eighteen days after arriving here, via a Thai transit camp and two years in a Cambodian prison, she had a job. Now working at Centurlink, she advises others from different backgrounds how to emulate her example. And she continues to educate herself: 'I like to learn all the time,' she says. 'It's not hard when you wish to learn.'

Since arriving in 1983, Soour Hai Gov has attended school, studied for a science degree, worked at several jobs, married and had a child, and started his own business. He is now Chairperson of the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of New South Wales. He was first offered the chance to attend school at the age of

13, while living in a Thai camp. He says: 'I was learning very fast because I was so keen ... I was like a sponge.'

Sorathy Pouk Michell, Head Teacher of the Khmer Language Sunday School, has been involved in the introduction of Khmer language programs in both primary and secondary schools, and for public exams. 'I believe the early courses I did with AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services), and the six months of work experience funded by the Commonwealth Employment Service got me where I am now,' she says. She sees the scaling down of such opportunities as regrettable: 'Newly arrived migrants really suffer. Unemployment will only increase.'

Por-Heang Ya was studying to be a doctor in Cambodia. In Australia, he has completed an Arts degree, worked for the Department of Community Services, and served as President of the Khmer Community. He is a strong advocate for a diverse society: 'Multiculturalism is the way to allow people to invest in each other. That way, they can contribute to a strong country,' he says.

This sense of both serving their own group, and extending their work to those beyond the immediate community echoes through the interviews. At Burnside Cabramatta Centre, Chong-Hean Ang manages multicultural, multidisciplinary programs for family support, child protection and youth work, including an adolescent legal service. The programs encompass Spanish, Vietnamese, Lao, Bengali and Hindi-speaking communities, as well as Khmers. 'We need to educate and empower people to take charge of their own lives,' he says. The aim is to encourage people to be both resilient and productive. Hean himself is completing a Master of Business Administration at the same time as his daughter is studying for her degree. As Nairand Kay puts it: 'You don't just cry at home. You've got to go where the service is available.'

Burnside is also organising training in management skills and leadership. Hean finds that cultural attitudes such as male domination, when challenged in this country, can create all kinds of problems. With loss of status and self-esteem due to unemployment, and the assertiveness of a generation of children educated here, men feel threatened, he says. The Men and Family Relationships program invites men to think about power dynamics within families, and the superior male strength that can lead to domestic violence. 'Men often don't realise how powerful they are within the family,' says Hean. 'Their attitude to their wives often was "You

stay home and feed the children. I go out there, work my guts out. I come home; you cook for me." But Khmer women in Australia don't want to be 'stuck at home ... now we've got our female members saying, "Look, I want to go out there, I want to have a life."'

Many refugees almost missed out on any life at all. Under the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979, most Cambodians suffered displacement, forced labour and starvation. Families were torn apart, childhood and youth destroyed, and homes and land stolen. The 1979 invasion by Vietnamese forces toppled Pol Pot and set up a new regime.

But the refugee exodus had already started. The Communist victories in 1975 in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, formerly French Indochina, set more than two million people on the move. A quarter of these had fled Cambodia. Australia took five Cambodian refugees in 1975, and 241 in 1976. By 1978, a larger resettlement program meant that 388 people came here, and numbers swelled in 1982-83 to over 4000 new arrivals. Since the mid-1980s, more people have arrived via the Thai transit camps, and the focus has been on family reunion. The 1991 Census reported 17 555 Cambodian-born people in Australia.

Khmer Community interviews at the National Library will supplement those recorded earlier, and related sound material such as National Press Club addresses on human rights and politics. In 1985-86, as part of the Cultural Context of Unemployment

project, a number of Cambodian refugees were interviewed in their own language. They spoke of their lives before Pol Pot, the treatment meted out to their families by the Khmer Rouge, escape to the transit camps and the challenges of resettling in Australia—finding homes, learning English and looking for work.

The new interviews tell what has happened since. These stories are full of the drive, determination and ambition necessary for success in a new society. Over and over again, the interviewees emphasise the advantages of becoming competent in English. Rams Var describes the language as a:

English ... to get a job, to feel you being to be a success in life, to go where you want to go. Without the language, you feel like you're limited, within your boundaries like around your house. You will be scared to travel, to catch a bus, catch a train somewhere, because you're scared of getting lost, of what's going to happen to you.

As they were contending with the new culture, Khmer Australians also struggled to avoid seeing the world with 'wounded eyes'. Everyone spoke of recurring nightmares of cruelty and hardship. Feelings of emptiness and loneliness can strike at unexpected times, they say. But memories of parents and siblings are cherished, their presence is often felt. This helps the survivors take big decisions and move forward.

Soour Hai Gov talks of the anger that initially motivated him in this

Por-Heang Ya, President Khmer Community 1994-98, at Angkor Wat. Photograph courtesy of Por-Heang Ya.



'I want to have a life', extract from article by Diana Giese in 'National Library of Australia News', May 2000, on KCNSW achievers, using quotations from the National Library's Khmer Community in Australia interviews that she recorded.

Sampot and Padaan: Traditional Cambodian Costume and Religious Panels, exhibition and seminars were held at the Liverpool Regional Museum (13 October – 22 December). The exhibition catalogue was written by Gill Green, Diana Giese and Sovannairand Kay.

2001

The Links to Learning Program replaced our successful HELP Program.

Beyond Survival: Reclaiming Culture held at the Museum of Sydney as part of Diana Giese's *Reclaiming the Past* series. Phanna Pao chaired a discussion on maintaining Khmer cultural traditions, with contributions from Soour Hai Gov and Kay Heng Taing, and demonstrations of the *apsara* and the *chhayam*. Article in *National Library of Australia News*, September.

A group of 48 was taken to the Temple in Bonnyrigg as part of Diana Giese's *Changing Sydney* tours (2001-02). Sovannairand Kay organised a photographic display of Angkor Wat; community history and identity were discussed with personal stories; there was a dance performance and home-cooked food. Participants said: 'I really enjoyed meeting some of the Khmer community on their own turf'; 'Eye-opening as to what can be achieved in 20 years'; 'They were interested in sharing their knowledge and helping others learn about their culture'

On 28 September, *Changing Sydney Open Day* was held at the Museum of Sydney. Thousands of people flocked to the Museum for a full day of multicultural performances, with audience participation. Program included: 'Imitate the graceful movements of Southeast Asian dance with

Sovannairand Kay and Vilayvanh Phitanong.'

2002

On 23 March, movers and shakers who live, work and play in Cabramatta came into the Whitlam Library to share their passion for the area, as part of Diana Giese's and Marilyn Oshana's *Living Library* series at Fairfield City Council libraries. Sovannairand Kay said: 'There is a positive community spirit here that comes largely from the diverse backgrounds of the people...people make a community, not bricks. People have spirit, not organisations.'

We love Cabramatta received extensive media coverage in local papers and on radio, including a follow-up article on Cabramatta High School and an editorial in the *Fairfield Champion*. A reader's letter said: 'Thank you *Champion* for giving us more good news about our area in one edition than the Sydney papers can seem to manage in one decade'.

Locals tell the real Cabramatta story

Area is not just crime hotspot

By KYLIE STEVENS

SOME people see Cabramatta as nothing more than a drug den and hotspot for crime.

But try telling that to the people who have chosen to work, live and raise their families in the local suburb.

Residents, community workers and local identities will loudly broadcast the "true story" this Saturday, from 2pm, when the Whitlam Library presents its new *We Love Cabramatta* display.

This presentation celebrates the diversity of people in the suburb, from Anglo-Celtic, immigrants, self-employed and professionals to today's youth.

"The mainstream media often puts too much emphasis on the bad things so it is up to the community to demonstrate the positive things about Cabramatta that often get overlooked," said its brainiac Diana Giese.

And she has plenty of supporters keen to abolish the negative stereotypes by emphasising a sense of community and vibrancy.

"Bad things do occur here but these kinds of things happen every-where, not just in Cabramatta," said student Dalin Vann.

"This kind of reputation portrayed by the media affects students' future prospects and they are treated differently, so it is about letting people understand that good things happen here by displaying a positive attitude."



THE REAL STORY... Cabramatta High School students Phuong Au, Juliana Cheng and David Ly, Uniting Care's Chong-Huan Ang (front) and youth worker Soour Hai Gov and student Dalin Vann (behind) preparing a few articles as part of a display that they say tells the true story of Cabramatta.

Arrived as a child orphan from Cambodia and is now a youth worker for Uniting Care, Burnside in Cabramatta adds:

"Cabramatta is like a safe comfort zone which is non-threatening where people are nice, giving young people the time to get ready for a bigger role in the community."

"It's time to tell everyone what it is really like."

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arrived as a child orphan from Cambodia and is now a youth worker for Uniting Care, Burnside in Cabramatta adds:

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arrived as a child orphan from Cambodia and is now a youth worker for Uniting Care, Burnside in Cabramatta adds:

Article from the 'Fairfield Champion' with Soour Hai Gov and Chong-Huan Ang pictured

On 22 June, KCNSW members participated in *A Fair Go*, a World Refugee Day celebration that was part of the *Living Library* series. Each of these events had an accompanying display in the entrance hall of the Library, for a week before and a week after.

On 22 September, a *Changing Sydney* tour group visited the Temple in Bonnyrigg.

On 18 October, the staircase to the KCNSW Office was replaced by a steel-framed galvanized unit with timber treads, costing \$12,202.40.

On 27 October, Rithy So was elected KCNSW President.

2003

On 3 May, Khmer and South American communities shared a presentation of music and dance as part of the *Living Library* series. Khmer musicians brought in and played the *korng thomm*, *roneat* and *tror*, imported from Cambodia. Traditional crafts were on display.



Front-page article from the 'Fairfield Advance' with a picture of KCNSW President Rithy So, about the Living Library presentation

From September, Khmer Community Radio was aired every Tuesday night for 1 hour from 7- 8pm, through 2GLF 89.3 FM.

In September, a Gambling Anonymous Support Worker was employed, with funding from CCBF.

2004

Daniel Lee was elected KCNSW President.

On 19 June, Diana Giese's *Travel at Home* tour group (Mosman Community College, 2003-present) visited the Temple, hosted by Chhay Hua Lim, a group of ladies from CAWC, and a children's dance group. They also visited Burnside Cabramatta to hear about their programs.

In August, a Khmer Networking Worker was employed with a year's funding from the Community Relations Commission, to develop community networks and structure, such as the Khmer Community Website and Directory.

A cultural dance group called Khemara Angkor was established. This Group has since been at the forefront of exhibiting Khmer culture through traditional dance.



Hanumann (Monkey) is courting Sovann Machha (golden mermaid). Dance performed by Khemara Angkor Group 2008



Sovann Machha (golden mermaid). Dance performed by Khemara Angkor Group

Members of the group have volunteered their time to perform at every major community event, and have also been invited to perform as well at other communities' events.

2006

Daniel Lee was re-elected KCNSW President.

From July, funding from DIMA changed, from providing for two CSSS (Community Settlement Services Scheme) Workers to one SGP (Settlement Grants Program). KCNSW split this into two positions so that both staff members still had a job. One staff member worked for two days with SGP, and had a three-day job as a coordinator for the Links to Learning Program, funded by the NSW Department of Education and Training to assist young people in junior high school to continue their education.

The Khmer Radio program continued every Tuesday night from 7- 8pm.

2008

Daniel Lee was re-elected for a third term.



Wishing Dance performed by Khemara Angkor Group, 2008

KCNSW continues to provide welfare services for the community. Apart from casework and community development, it plays a major role in promoting and preserving Cambodian culture through the dance group, collecting Khmer musical instruments, community radio and teaching Khmer language to young people and providing English classes.

KCNSW PRESIDENTS

Nov. 1977 Establishment of KCNSW
with Seang Lay Siv as
Temporary President

One-Year Term		Two-Year Term	
1977-78	Dr. Kem Kang	1986-88	Chamrong Vuthy
1978-79	Ek Bun Ang Neak Dr. Kang Kem	1988-90	Sath Srey
1979-80	Por Seng Lay	1990-92	Saing Heang Seng
1980-81	Por Seng Lay	1992-94	Bunna Thei
1981-82	Por Seng Lay	1994-96	Por Heang Ya
1982-83	Sokhan Yim	1996-98	Por Heang Ya
1983-84	Por Seng Lay	1998-00	Sovannairand Kay
1984-85	Sakun Kiet Pon Ou	2000-02	Sovannairand Kay
1985-86	Meng Lim Sorn Bunna Thei	2002-04	Rithy So
		2004-06	Daniel Lee
		2006-08	Daniel Lee
		2008-	Daniel Lee

2. CAMBODIAN BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF NSW Inc. (CBS)

1984

The Cambodian Buddhist Society started as the Buddhist Committee of KCNSW. It was also known as the Khmer Cultural Sub-Committee.

In March 1984 this Sub-Committee rented a fibro house at 65 Anthony Street, Fairfield to set up a temporary Buddhist Temple for 10 nuns to congregate to perfect their religious practice, and to use as a venue for celebrating community festivities. Dr Kem Kang was appointed as President of this Sub-Committee, but resigned a few months later. One of the nuns, Bora Sam, was left in charge of the day-to-day cost of running this Temple with other Cambodian elderly.

1985

Venerable Sakhon Long was sponsored by KCNSW, and arrived in Sydney to oversee all Buddhist practice in the temporary Temple.

1986

With much assistance from an Australian friend, Dr Gennie Louies, the Committee wrote a very detailed submission to the NSW Government to apply for a block of land in Bonnyrigg on which to establish a Community Centre and a Buddhist Temple for newly-arrived Khmer settlers. It was pointed out that the Buddhist Temple was a focal point for community daily life in Cambodia, and that both centres should be together.

Despite there being some resentment from the Buddhist Sub-Committee, which

thought that the Buddhist Temple should be independent from KCNSW, both organisations eventually agreed to co-operate. It was agreed that KCNSW should be the sole applicant for this land. Sokhan Yim was President of this Sub-Committee.

1987

NSW Premier Neville Wran granted the lease of a block of land at the corner of Tarlington Parade and Bonnyrigg Avenue, Bonnyrigg, to KCNSW for the building of a Community Centre and the Buddhist Temple. The Buddhist Sub-Committee and the Monks played a very important part in raising community funds to build a Community Hall, a Monks' Residence and fences.

1988-89

The temporary Temple in Fairfield was relocated to the permanent monastery at the present location in Bonnyrigg. This monastery is called Wat Khemarangsaram and is in the same compound as the Office of KCNSW.

The Buddhist Sub-Committee became incorporated as the Cambodian Buddhist Society of NSW Inc. (CBS). Despite being incorporated, the CBS continued operating like an affiliate organisation of KCNSW. Its activities concentrate on fulfilling the religious needs of the community, whereas KCNSW meets welfare needs.

The constitution of CBS stipulates that the affairs of the corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors composed of 15 people. The Abbott and the Assistant Abbott of the Temple shall automatically be

members of the Board of Directors. The remaining members shall be elected by members of the corporation. Each elected Director shall hold office for two years.

Venerable Sakhon Long has been accepted as the Abbot of the Wat Khemarangsaram since his arrival in 1985. Sokhan Yim was elected President of CBS from 1988 until 1994.



Buddha's statue inside the Dharma Hall in Wat Khemarangsaram.

1990-92

Members of the community were very anxious to see the construction of the main building in the compound, Preah Vihear, delayed.

The rift in the relationship between CBS and KCNSW started as a result of the supporters of each organisation, including the Abbot and his supporters, trying to gain monopoly of management of the whole Centre. There were discussions on having a community referendum to decide which

organisation should run the Centre, but the situation calmed down after arbitration from the Ethic Affairs Commission of NSW. Both sides were told that KCNSW was the lessee of the land, and that it was impossible to do anything without its approval. The lease of the block had been granted on condition that it was used both for the Community Centre and the Buddhist Temple. Therefore both organisations should co-operate with one another.

1992-94

The Temple Project could not get off the ground as neither CBS nor KCNSW was able to raise enough funding to start the project. There was a complete lack of trust between the two organisations. Despite being in the same complex the communication between the two organisations was completely cut off. These were the darkest years in the history of the relationship between CBS and KCNSW. Sokhan Yim was still President of CBS and Bunna Thei President of KCNSW.

1994

Saroeung Lon was elected President of CBS, after Por Heang Ya was elected President of KCNSW.

The two organisations started working together again.

A joint Temple Project Committee was formed to oversee the building of the temple. Ngin Sour Lim was elected President. Mr Lim and his wife Chhay Hua Lim were very committed to this project and were able to win financial support from among Cambodians and Cambodian-Chinese businessmen to start the project properly.



Mrs Chhay Hua Lim, Treasurer Temple Project 1995 at a fundraising night.

This Committee was very active in their fundraising activities. They sponsored singers from Cambodia, organised fundraising banquets in restaurants and in the Monastery during community events such as New Year and Pchum Ben.

1996

Ngin Sour Lim was elected CBS President. Meng Eang Lim was elected as the Temple Project Committee's President, while Por Heang Ya was re-elected as President of KCNSW for a second term. The construction of the Temple continued.

1998

In March the Temple was completed and was officially opened. For details of the cost of the Project and the opening, refer to KCNSW 1998 section.

1998-00

Daniel Lee was elected CBS President.

2000

Daniel Lee was elected President.

Apart from regular festivities held in accordance with the Buddhist calendar no major project was developed.

2004

Kim Hor Lim was elected President.

The main gate of the monastery was built and opened on 24 December.



Main gate of Wat Khemarangsaram, 2004



Inside of Main gate



Venerable Sakhon Long addresses the audience at the opening of the Temple 1998

The first building in the complex is the Preah Vihear (Temple). This prominent and magnificent building, with its colourful art works and elaborate roof, is used as a forum for initiation into monkhood and a shrine for worship.



Preah Vihear (Temple) opened in March 1998

A Buddhist Library was set up under the Preah Vihear.



New Stupa (Chedei) next to the Temple (Preah Vihear) in Bonnyrigg

2007

A Stupa was built next to the Temple at a cost of \$163,000.



Stupa built in 2007.

There is also a Buddhist Hall, a general function area in which the community can hold anything from a special charity function to a big lunch.



Buddhist Hall

Then there is the Monks' Residence. This double-storey four-bedroom building serves as a dormitory for resident Monks and their visitors.



Monks' Residence built in 1989



The KCNSW Office is above the Monastery kitchen and bathroom

Since its establishment, CBS has played a major role in fulfilling the religious needs of the Cambodian community in NSW through organising religious activities in accordance with the Buddhist calendar.

CBS PRESIDENTS

1988-94	Sokhan Yim
1994-96	Saroeung Lon
1996-98	Ngin Sour Lim
1998-00,-02,-04	Daniel Lee
2004-06,-08	Kim Hor Lim
2009-	Theau Yorth

PRESIDENTS OF THE TEMPLE PROJECT

1994-96	Ngin Sour Lim
1996-98	Meng Eang Lim

3. CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL Inc. (CAWC)

1983

The Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW (CAWC) was originally known as Khmer Interagency (KI). It was established as an information sharing forum and a means of support for those who work with Khmer clients or who are interested in Khmer issues. The group meets each month to liaise, share information, discuss problems and lobby for better services for Khmer settlers.

The first meeting was called by the Co-ordinator of the Migrant Education Centre in the then- Cabramatta Hostel, Kevin McAndrew, and workers from various agencies, including Departments of Community Services, Health, Education, Immigration and Social Security, Burnside Welfare Program, TAFE, STARTTS and Khmer Associations attended.

Por Heang Ya, a District Officer with the Department of Youth and Community Service, was nominated as the Convener, and other members included Youvath Sik, Ramy Var, Ravy Heng, Chong-Hean Ang, Ly Chantha Sok and Meng Eang Thai were nominated as contact people to assist with any enquiries.

KI was also a training forum for Cambodian workers, to improve their skills in lobbying, leadership, chairing meetings and community management. They were able to join together and assess their needs then request training intended to redress weak areas in their work practices or in their overall performance. There was a range of training, including public speaking,

computer skills, strategy planning, report writing, and legal issues relating to constitutions and community management.

1989

KI made strong representation to the Australian Government on issues relating to Cambodian refugees in Thailand, the first Boat People who arrived in Broome in Christmas 1989 and a few more boats that followed. Subsequent to KI's representation the Australian Government increased their intake under a Special Humanitarian Program to accept more Australian Cambodians' relatives who had been stranded in refugee camps in Thailand. A special visa category, Special Assistance Category (SAC), was created by the Keating Government in 1995 to accept Cambodian Boat People and their relatives straight from Cambodia, after their repatriation.

1992

During Refugee Week, on 26 June, KI presented a one-day seminar on Khmer cultural awareness, *Khmer Culture and Customs Seminar*. This was designed to inform non-Khmer workers about culture, customs, religion and education relating to people from Cambodia. It was praised, and seen as being very successful. KI was very grateful to the people who contributed to presenting papers and organising the seminar, including Chong Hean Ang, Seminar Convener and Presenter; Por Heang Ya, KI Convener and Presenter; Ramy Var, Facilitator and Presenter; Youvat Sik, Presenter; Saing Heang Seng,

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President KCNSW and Presenter; Nola Randall, Presenter; Dr Chris Sohan, Presenter and workshop facilitators including Ravy Heng, Tek Heang Ya, Theau Yorth, Vannak Ing, Min Hauv Yorth, Sovannarand Kay and Phiny Ung.

In November 1992, the notes and outlines of this seminar were archived by the National Library of Australia under *Khmer Interagency, Resources, Khmer Cultural Seminar*.

On 26 July Por Heang Ya called a special mediation meeting between the Management Committees of KCNSW and CBS, led by Presidents Bunna Thei and Sokhan Yim respectively. The Venerable Sakhon Long was also present at this meeting. This meeting was to help both managements define their objectives and areas of responsibility in the management of the Community Centre. It was a very successful meeting, with both organisations agreeing in principle to co-operate with each other and join together in organising all major events at the Centre. CBS would pay the council rates and water rates for the whole complex. Each organisation would pay its own electricity, telephone and insurance bills.

In another meeting, on 23 August, both organisations agreed to work together on the extension of the kitchen of the Temple.

KI became registered as a charitable organisation and adapted a more formal structure, through election of a Committee. Members elected the following Committee: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and three Committee Members.

KI also provided advice on Khmer issues and made referrals to appropriate contacts. For example, KI was asked for advice on

Cambodian culture and customs by the Australian Army contingent before their departure to Cambodia to join in the UN-supervised General Elections of 1992.

KI has been regularly consulted by newly-appointed Australian Ambassadors before their departure to Cambodia.



KI organised a demonstration in front of the Immigration Minister Gerry Hand and MP Mrs Janice Crosio, pleading with the Federal Government not to send Boat People back to Cambodia.



Por Heang Ya gives a TV interview about the Boat People.

1994

In June, Por Heang Ya resigned as Chairperson of KI to stand for KCNSW President. Kim Ann Chy acted as Chairperson.

1995-96

Ramy Var was elected Chairperson.

On 27 August 27, Khmer Interagency became Khmer Interagency Incorporated. Its constitution was amended in accordance with the requirements of the *Association Incorporation Act 1984*. Committee members were elected annually by the membership at the Annual General Meeting.



KI Annual General Meeting 1995

1996-97

Sovannairand Kay was elected Chairperson.

1997

Chong Hean Ang was elected Chairperson.

In 1997, funding was received for a Level 3 worker from the then Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs under its Community Services Settlement

Scheme (CSSS). This provided the funds to employ a worker to continue the organisation's work of establishing infrastructure and supporting Khmer organisations and workers.

1998

On 7 August, a State Conference with the theme *Australian Khmer: Thriving on the Waves of Change* was held at Granville College of TAFE. The aims were first, to celebrate the survival and determination of our remarkable Khmer refugee community, and second to examine difficulties and challenges faced by the Khmer community in NSW.

Later this year, Soour Hai Gov was elected Chairperson.

1999

Further funding was received from DIMA for two years for a CSSS worker.

'Life lost, life found' – Khmer Australians

Saturday 29 May at 2pm

Mr Chong Hean Ang, of Khmer Interagency, will tell of the difficulties and challenges that have been faced by Khmers in Australia. Ms Sorathy Pouk Michell will give a personal account of her journey out of Pol Pot's Cambodia. The presentation will be a celebration of the survival of this remarkable refugee community.

'Life lost, life found': Khmer Australians was held as part of Diana Giese's Reclaiming the Past series at the Museum of Sydney.

On 24 August, the name of the organisation was changed to the *Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW (CAWC)*.

2000

Tek Heang Ya was elected as Chairperson.

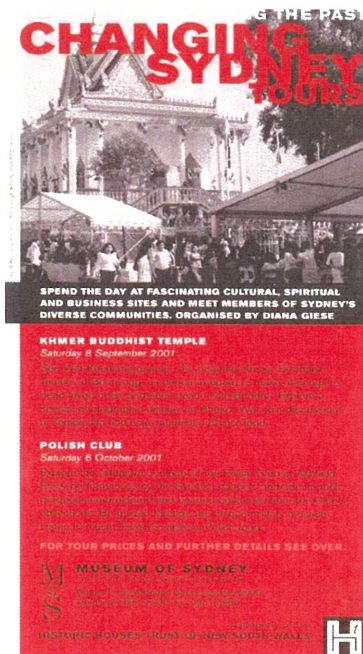
One the most exciting projects of this year was the *Living in Harmony* Project, a costume and dance party held at Bankstown's Maxim's Restaurant.



Living in Harmony event with multicultural costumes, 2001

2001

CAWC was involved in cultural projects such as Diana Giese's *Changing Sydney*.



Diana Giese took a Changing Sydney tour group to the Temple.

CAWC received DIMA funding for a further two years.

Chong Hean Ang was elected as Chairperson until 2004.

2002

Early in the year additional funding was received from various sources, including from the Department of Community Relations, for a part-time worker to support the Women's Support Network; NSW Premier's Department for a part-time worker to provide educational activities on drug issues to Khmer families; from the Department of Industrial relations, a full-time worker to educate Khmer Outworkers; and Fairfield City Council for training and educational activities for Khmer families.

2003

On 23 May, a very successful state conference was organised, entitled *Seizing Our Future - Australian Khmer: Reflecting on our cycle of life and creating a positive destiny*. This conference was held Thomas and Rachael Moore Education Centre, Liverpool Hospital.

CAWC moved to its current premises in Bonnyrigg.

With funding from DIMIA, CAWC commissioned a report on Needs Analysis of Khmer People in NSW. This report entitled *Developing Communities, Developing Needs – Khmer Needs Analysis 2003*, was written by Paul van Reyk and launched in June.

Funding was received for the Women's Leadership Project and Khmer Elderly Project.

In November, the Khmer Family Support Drug Awareness Project CD was launched by Cathy Noble from NSW Premier's Department

Another successful *Living in Harmony* night was held, with young people's participation in researching and demonstrating Khmer traditional costumes.

2004

Tek Heang Ya was elected Chairperson

CAWC grew from having two full-time Workers to a staff of seven for its projects. There was one CSSS Worker; a Worker for the Khmer Leadership Projects; for the Khmer Women's Outworker Project; for the Capacity Building for Older Women Project; for Promoting Community Access; and for Developing Networks for Families with Young Children who are affected by Domestic Violence; and a Program to promote Youth Leadership and Community Harmony.

Cross-Cultural Training Seminar held in Liverpool.

Another successful annual *Living in Harmony* event, with the planning participation of young people.



Multicultural costumes at Living in Harmony

CAWC hosted Diana Giese's *Travel at Home* tour group to a delicious lunch during their visit to the Temple.



Sarim and Sok-Luong, staff from CAWC, with the feast prepared for the tour group.

2006

Tek Heang Ya was re-elected as Chairperson

On 29 September, CAWC in collaboration with the Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre, ran a half-day workshop on *Working with the Cambodian community: an essential guide to cultural knowledge for understanding and effective practice*, for those working with clients from a Cambodian background.

2007

In June CAWC produced a resource kit entitled: *Cambodian Cultural Information for Age Care Service Providers: Special Focus on the Khmer Aged Population*. This was developed by worker Bamathy Somasegaram, with assistance from Debbie Giacomini, Nola Randall, Professor Sivayogan and Yvonne Santalucia. It was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

In August, the 7th annual *Living in Harmony* Multicultural Dinner Dance Gala was held. There were a number of cultural performances including Spanish singers, a belly dancer, and Australian bush dancing, as well as singers from Cambodia.

On 14 December, a conference on issues for young people, *A Focus on Cambodian Young People in Australia* was held at Cabramatta High School. Its objective was to explore issues facing Cambodian young people and to develop strategies to get them involved in community activities.



Refugees sharing experiences with one another



Tek Heang Ya addressed the Refugee Week 2008 celebration at the CAWC Centre in Bonnyrigg.

2008

On 21 June, to coincide with Refugee Week, CAWC celebrated at its Centre in Bonnyrigg, with the theme *30 Years of Cambodian Settlement in NSW*, and launched the *Project Settlement of People from Cambodia in NSW*, a collection of data.



Exhibition during Refugee Week celebrations, 2008

Since its inception KI/CAWC has played an important role in advocating for better service for the Cambodian community in NSW and harmonising relationships within the Cambodian community and between it and the wider Australian community.

CAWC believes that the successful and co-operative development of the Khmer community in Sydney is partly a result of the work of KI and the continuing structured work of CAWC.



CAWC's Management and Staff in 2008

Front row: Miss Dany Ya, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Mrs Tek Heang Ya, President; Mira, Community Partner Program Worker; Mr Sarithya Tuy, Assistant Director of Community Relations.

Back row: Thin Em, Youth and Family Capacity Building Worker, Lachlan Erskine, Treasurer; Andrew Lee, Director of Youth Relations; Andrew Chong Hean Ang, Director of Community Relations; Ky Chea, Settlement Grants Program Worker.

(Missing from the picture is Ms Nola Randall-Mohk, Director of Human Resources)



Board Meeting

CAWC CHAIRPERSONS

One-Year Term

1984-94	Por Heang Ya
1994	Kim-Ann Chy
1995-96	Ramy Var
1996-97	Sovannairand Kay
1997-98	Chong-Hean Ang
1998-99	Soour Hai Gov
1999-00	Tek Heang Ya
2000-01	Tek Heang Ya
2001-02	Chong-Hean Ang
2002-03	Chong-Hean Ang
2003-04	Chong-Hean Ang

Two-Year Term

2004-06	Tek Heang Ya
2006-08	Tek Heang Ya
2008-	Tek Heang Ya

4. KHMER YOUTH ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc. (KYA)

1984

Khmer Youth Association of NSW (KYA) was founded by Yothin Som with a group of 30 her youths.

KYA focused on strengthening relationships among Khmer young people and promulgating Khmer culture. It was an association based on providing social and cultural activities and functions for newly-arrived young Cambodians. Despite having its own constitution, Management Committee and membership, KYA operated under the umbrella of KCNSW, as an affiliated association. This was to allow this young association to use KCNSW's office facilities and avoid paying separate insurance costs.

Dararith Meas was elected President. Both Mr Meas and Mr Som were highly dedicated and looked after the organisation for seven years, 1985-92.

1993

Korat Ung was elected President.

1994

Saly Toch was elected President

1995

Sowathei Ek was elected President. He led the organisation strongly, holding many functions and attracting much publicity.

In August KYA became incorporated and was no longer under the wing of KCNSW.

1996

Varianne Chhy became President with fewer Committee members. This was attributed to some of the young people not wanting to see KYA politicised with a focus on Cambodian politics.

In August, the KYA *Apsara* newsletter was created.

1998

Sokhunna Pho was elected President, but did not complete his term due to personal reasons, so it was left to Andrew Lee to continue the term to 1999.

Dino Ou came on board and oversaw the KYA's Management Team midway through the year. At this stage, KYA was in trouble, since there were only five Committee Members and membership numbers were declining. At one stage it was suggested KYA be dissolved and a motion was put forward for its dissolution. The motion failed, and instead a revival began. The constitution was amended to include an Investigation Committee and three Advisers to provide transparency and save the organisation from near-collapse.

2000

Kay Heng Taing was elected President.

2001

Sawathei Nhem was President until 2003.

2003

Rattana Keo was elected President.

There was concern about the decline in membership and the lack of interest among young people in becoming Committee Members. Although so far the association has managed to sustain itself financially, it will collapse if it fails to attract enough Cambodian young people.



Educational outing to Warragamba Dam

2007

On 14 December, KYA participated in a conference organised by CAWC at Cabramatta High School dealing with issues facing young people, and exploring and developing strategies to engage youth in the community. Young people attended in school groups, and participated in workshops.

2008

The incumbent President is Sothea Loeth. Her newly-elected Committee is receiving training in leadership skills and being mentored by the Youth and Families Capacities Building Worker from CAWC, through youth leadership camping and other educational and recreational activities.

KYA PRESIDENTS

1984-92	Dararith Meas
1993	Korat Ung
1994	Saly Toch
1995	Sowathei Ek
1996	Varianne Chhy
1998	Sokhunna Pho
2000-01	Kay-Heng Taing
2001-03	Sawathei Nhem
2003-07	Rattana Keo
2008-	Sothea Loeth



Tug 'o' War – co-operation is the key to success

5. SALVATION & CAMBODIAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc.

Wat Dharmasamaki

1995

The Salvation & Cambodian Culture Association of NSW Inc. was established in 1995 and incorporated in 1996. It is a non-profit and non-politically affiliated organisation established in response to the growing needs of the Cambodian community in the local areas of Cabramatta, Canley Vale and Fairfield.

The association was initially located at the corner of Melville Avenue and Longfield Street Cabramatta, under the great leadership of the late Som Vichet.

The main objectives of the Association are to promote and maintain Cambodian culture in Australia. This includes religion, literacy, arts and crafts and Cambodian cultural heritage.

It also provides assistance to individuals and families in welfare and settlement needs in Australia.

The organisation is run by part-time volunteers with no paid workers. Its committee comprises professionals and retired individuals.

1998

With community support, the Association purchased a heritage property at 1 Stuart St, Canley Vale.

2000

The cost of the purchase of the centre was fully paid off. It was successful in obtaining a rezoning approval from residential to a

'Place of Worship', and later in obtaining approval for a development application to build community facilities.

It was also successful in obtaining funding of just under \$200,000.00 from the Department of Transport and Regional Services to build the community facilities.

2006

The facilities were completed in late 2006 and are now widely used by the community for various activities.



Main Hall at Wat Dharmasamaki, Canley Vale

The organisation has been very active in organising various cultural and religious rituals/events such as Cambodian New Year; Ben Pchum Ben, Meak Bochea, Visak Bochea, Katina, and annual Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day.

It provides assistance and guidance to individuals and families on many cultural and religious issues. It also provides weekly Dharma teachings at the premises.

PRESIDENTS

1995-98, 2002-05	Chy Por Yeak (aka Som Vichet)
1998- 2000	Sarou Ouk
2000-02	Khim Sou
2005-	Lychantha Sok



Monks' Residence at Wat Dharmasamaki



Wat Dharmasamaki in Canley Vale

6. KAMPUCHEA KROM CULTURAL CENTRE OF NSW Inc.

Wat Ratanaram Monastery

1995

The Centre was established as a community centre for Cambodians born in South Vietnam, for them to meet and socialise, and for religious practice.

The Centre was originally located in another place, but later moved into its present accommodation. The first Management was led by Sowathei Ek who was the founder and later President, for the first five years.

2000

Since 2000 a number of people have held the President's position including Chen Thach, Thanh Hay Ly, Ly Sokun and currently Siv Reach.

2002

On 23 December, with a loan from the bank, the Committee purchased the present property as their permanent Centre.

2007

Since Siv Reach was elected as President, a lot of effort has been made to keep the Centre active in order to raise funds to pay off the cost.

PRESIDENTS OF THE CENTRE

1995-2008	Sowathei Ek
	Chen Thach
	Thanh Hay Ly
	Sokun Ly
	Siv Reach



Kampuchea Krom Cultural Centre, Broomfield St, Cabramatta.

7. KHMER KROM AUSTRALIAN BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION OF NSW Inc.

Wat Ketanak Khmer Kampuchea Krom

1996

Established a temporary residence for a monk in Fairfield West.

Kim Chhoun was elected President. The aim of the Association is to preserve the culture and traditions of the Cambodian people from the former Khmer lands in South Vietnam and to provide a place of worship according to Buddhist practice.

1998

A 3.2 hectare block of land with a four-bedroom home was bought in Rossmore, to build a Buddhist Monastery.



A large Buddha statue in a newly-built shelter at Wat Ketanak, Rossmore

2000

Dan Tran was elected President, and has been very dedicated. He has spent a lot of time and effort getting Liverpool Council's

approval for the development application to build a Buddhist Monastery on the property, as well as in raising funds to pay off the cost of the property.

2008

From 8 April, the Association has fully owned the property. A ground breaking ceremony was held to mark the commencement of the construction of a 35-metre by 25-metre Dharma Hall at the Centre.

Currently the Monastery has five resident Buddhist Monks for providing religious services for the community. They are also very active in working with the Committee to raise funds to build the Buddhist Hall, then other buildings in the complex. There is still a lot of work to be done and the Committee needs much support from the community.



Ceremony offering food to the monks at Wat Ketanak

PRESIDENTS

1996-99	Kim Chhoun
2000-07	Dan Tran
2008-	Tha Lim

8. BONNYRIGG KHMER LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Introduction of Khmer language in State schools

1991

The Bonnyrigg Khmer School was established.

Prior to this, the Khmer Language Ethnic School was running intermittently during the early 1980s. It is a non-profit organisation which conducts classes in Khmer language and culture and dance each Sunday, from 9 am to 12 noon during the school term. The teaching program includes two hour-long lessons in speaking, reading and writing Khmer, half an hour break and half an hour cultural program, either traditional dance or songs.

The school is staffed by trained volunteer teachers and managed by a School Committee. The Committee and the Head Teacher are elected every year at the AGM. The role of the Committee is to co-ordinate the operation of the school and to work together with parents. The role of the Head Teacher is to co-ordinate the teaching staff and develop the School program in consultation with the teachers and the Committee.

The School has been very successful in developing teaching programs for primary and secondary students in both Khmer literacy and culture.

1992

Cabramatta Primary School started teaching Khmer Language K-6.

1996

Three Primary Schools: Horsley Park, Fairfield West and Cabramatta West started teaching Khmer language programs.

1997

Khmer language was approved by the NSW Board of Studies to run as a Saturday School Community Languages Program for high school-aged students from Years 7 to 12.

The Saturday School of Community Languages was opened at Liverpool Girls' High School to teach Khmer language to high school students.

These classes were the result of the Khmer Community's effort in requesting that the Department start a secondary Khmer Program leading to the Higher School Certificate.

As the result the students will now be able to begin Khmer language study in the primary years at Bonnyrigg Khmer School and continue Khmer study up to Years 10 or 12 at the Saturday School of Community Languages.

1998

Over the years the students have been busy performing Khmer dances on a number of different occasions. Each performance has been well received by the audience.



Students of Bonnyrigg Khmer Language School performed a traditional Khmer dance during the Sema Ceremony at Wat Khemarangsaram, Bonnyrigg in March 1998.

1999

Cabramatta High School started teaching Years 11 and 12 Khmer Language Programs two days a week as part of the HSC.

2002

Canley Vale Primary School started teaching Khmer language three days per week.

2008

Harrington Street Primary School started teaching Khmer language three days per week.

The Bonnyrigg Khmer Language School has been operating to the present day at Bonnyrigg Primary School.

The existence of the School is largely due to the commitment of Sorathy Michell, who is the Head Teacher, and her husband, Michael Michell. Both have been involved in supporting language programs at both primary and secondary schools. The School also owes a lot of its success to the support of parents and community members who have donated their time and commitment acting as teachers and Committee members and encouraging their children to learn the Khmer language.

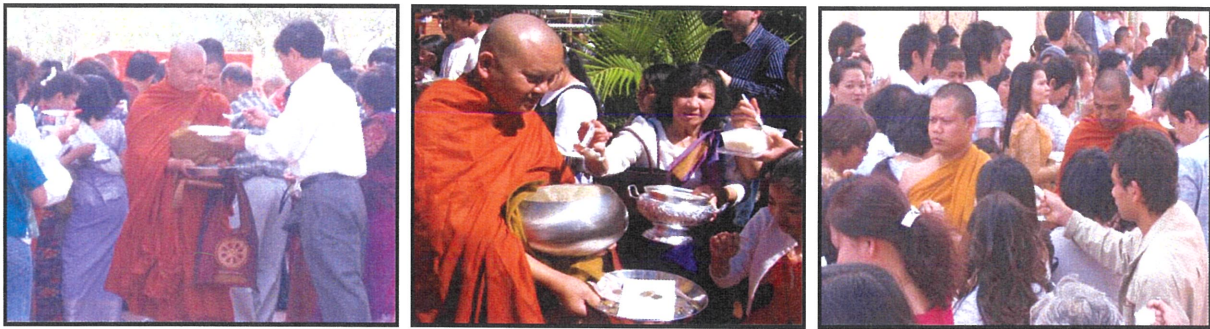


Young students perform traditional dances during Pchum Ben Festival at Wat Khemarangsaram, 27 September 2008.

PCHUM BEN FESTIVAL

2008

The Cambodian community in New South Wales celebrates
Pchum Ben Festival at Wat Khemarangsaram



Food is offered to Buddhist monks in the belief that such a deed will benefit the spirits of deceased relatives



Young students perform during Pchum Ben Festival at Wat Khemarangsaram



Everyone comes together during Pchum Ben to celebrate, play music and dance



*Wat Khemarangsaram in the afternoon
Bonnyrigg, 2009*

Current Cambodian Organisations in NSW

Australian Cambodian Community Inc.

Australian Cambodian Growers Association

Bonnyrigg Khmer Language School

Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc. (CAWC)

Cambodian Buddhist Society of NSW Inc. (CBS) – *Wat Khemarangsaram*

Kampuchea Krom Cultural Centre of NSW Inc. – *Wat Ratanaram*

Khmer Community of New South Wales Inc. (KCNSW)

Khmer Krom Australian Buddhist Association of NSW Inc. – *Wat Kettanak Khmer
Kampuchea Krom*

Khmer Youth Association of NSW Inc. (KYA)

Salvation & Cambodian Culture Association of NSW Inc. – *Wat Dharmasamaki*

For details of any of the above organisations, contact the Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc. on 02 8786 2581



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