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CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC

Seizing Our Future

AUSTRALIAN KHMER:

**reflecting on our cycle of life and
creating a positive destiny**



**CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE
COUNCIL OF NSW INC**

STATE CONFERENCE

2003

An examination of the cycles of development.



held on Friday 23 May 2003

at 9.15 am

Thomas and Rachel Moore Education Centre
Liverpool Hospital

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc wishes to acknowledge the hard work of the committee, presenters and all those involved in organising the conference and who gave their time and energies on the day, thus enabling this conference to take place. We also wish to thank the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs for providing the funding, through the Community Settlement Services Scheme and Ms Phanna Pao who is the conference organiser and our CSSS funded worker.

Board of Directors

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Volunteer – with women’s network	Ms Sarim Chey

Conference Sub-Committee

Mr Chong-Hean Ang
Ms Ravy Heng
Ms Marlene Henry
Ms Phanna Pao
Ms Nola Randall-Mohk
Ms Diana Giese

This document has been collated and edited by Nola Randall-Mohk and Phanna Pao.

PROGRAMME

- 9.15 am Registration
- 9.45 am **Ms Diana Giese – MC**
Welcome – *Mr Chong-Hean Ang*,
Chairperson
- 9.55 am **Aboriginal Welcome** - *Mr Merv Donovan*,
Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation
- 10.00 am **Keynote Address**
“Putting the Heart Back into the Cambodian People”
Professor Maurice Eisenbruch
Director, Centre for Multicultural Health,
University of New South Wales
- 10.20 am **“Khmer kids: Youth of today, leaders of tomorrow”**
Ms Elisabeth Pickering
School Counsellor / Psychologist,
Department of Education
- 10.40 am **“Can We Make a Change?”**
Ms Muntha Crowe
Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.
- 11.00 am **Question time**
- 11.20 am **Morning Tea**
- 11.30 am **Performance**
Mr Soth Tek
Cambodian Traditional Musician
- 11.50 am **“Would you believe... facing reality”**
Mr Kerry Murphy
Associate Solicitor
Craddock Murray Neumann
- 12.10 pm **“Developing Communities, Developing Needs”**
Mr Paul VanRyke
Researcher

- 12.30 pm **Questions**
- 12.45 pm **Lunch - Cambodian**
Newam Trosok (Cucumber Salad)
Mee soouh sut mwun (bean thread salad with chicken)
Mee Bompornng (Vegetarian noodles with torfu, tomato, mixed sauce)
Sweet biscuits and fruit
Tea and coffee
- 1.30 pm **“Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”**
Mr Chong-Hean Ang
 Senior Manager of South Western Sydney Region
 UnitingCare Burnside
- 1.50 pm **”Spot the Leader”**
 What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”
Ms Marlene Henry
 Multicultural Access Project Worker
 Fairfield City Council
 and
Ms Nola Randall-Mohk
 Outreach & International Student Co-ordinator
 Granville College of TAFE
- 2.10 pm **Questions**
- 2.30 pm **Afternoon Tea**
- 2.50 pm **Panel Discussion – Chaired by Di Murray**
Acting Institute Director, SWS Institute of TAFE
Dept of Industrial Relations – The NSW Government
 Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian
 clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a
 more balanced life and positive future”
- Dr Eileen Pittaway*
 Research on Khmer Elderly
- Dr Thel Thong*
 (Creating a positive future by ways of understanding
 life and the process of Karma)
- 3.30 pm **Collect Issue Cards**
(Participants to note three main issues arising from today)
- 3.40 pm **Vote of Thanks**
- 3.50 pm **Close**

CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC

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BIO DATA

Chong-Hean Ang, his wife and two children came to Sydney in mid-1983. In Australia, he has obtained a Master in Social Administration from UWS and a post-graduate qualification from the Australian Graduate School of Management – the Consortium of Sydney and NSW Universities. Currently, Chong-Hean is the Senior Manager of South West Sydney Region for UnitingCare Burnside, a large and leading agency in child protection, residential care and family support in NSW. He is also presently leading the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc as its President. In a capacity as a board member, Chong-Hean advises a number of government and community based organisations on management and cross-cultural issues. He has been recently engaged by Sydney University to be an adviser on a United Nations project in Cambodia on a development of a legal system dealing with juvenile delinquency. He is passionate about change management, teamwork and he is an active advocate for diversity in workplace and society.

Ms Muntha Crowe arrived in Australia on a scholarship in December 1970. I became a secondary teacher. Later, I taught Khmer in the first language maintenance program in a primary school in Melbourne for nearly eight years.

I have been involved in Khmer community work in Melbourne in different capacities at different times since 1976.

From 1992 I have worked as a broadcaster at Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.

Mr Merv Donovan is from the North Coast of NSW and is a member of the Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation. He has a long experience in dealing with Aboriginal communities on a professional working level and at a social level of "growing up" and living in an Aboriginal community.

Since 1993 Merv has worked in Aboriginal Programs in TAFE NSW and currently holds the position of Aboriginal Development Manager in South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE.

Professor Maurice Eisenbruch is Professor of Multicultural Health at the University of New South Wales and Director of the Centre for Multicultural Health.

During the early 1980s, he worked at the University of Cambridge and then at Harvard Medical School, where he carried out research with the Cambodian community, especially with unaccompanied minors. During the 1990s, he moved to teach at the University of Paris. He led a research operation at CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research) in Paris. He was also Director of Studies (Associé) at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences in Paris.

Fourteen years ago, he started working in the then Peoples Republic of Kampuchea on cultural issues in mental health, women's and children's health, and HIV/AIDS and malaria. He and his assistants have worked with more than 1,200 traditional healers in hundreds of villages around the countryside. He was Honorary Professor of Clinical Psychology and Anthropology at the Royal Phnom Penh University, and Counsellor, Institut Bouddhique. He has held consultancies in Cambodia with WHO, European Union, UNESCO and UNFPA. Eisenbruch returned to Australia 1999.

Ms Diana Giese organises programs across communities for libraries and museums, at federal, state and local level. Since 1992, she has co-ordinated oral history projects for the National Library of Australia, including *The Khmer Community in Australia* (see www.nla.gov.au). Products of her work include the books *Astronauts, Lost Souls and Dragons* (University of Queensland Press, 1997) and *Beyond Chinatown* (National Library, 1995), ABC radio programs, videos, CDs, archives and exhibitions.

Ms Ravy Heng had commenced studies in medicine prior to 1975 but had to abandon this when the Khmer Rouge took power. She arrived in Australia in 1980, and studied first Accountancy at TAFE, then transferred to and completed the Welfare Certificate in 1985. She worked as an Ethnic Teachers' Aid to support herself while studying part-time. Upon the completion of the Welfare course, she obtained work in the Department of Health as an Ethnic Health Worker. This required her to do further study and she completed the Certificate of Counselling in 1986. She continues to work at the South Western Sydney Area Health Service located at Fairfield Community Health Service. She is currently undertaking a qualification in Adult Education at UTS.

Marlene Henry is the Community-Project Officer - Multicultural and Indigenous at Fairfield City Council. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree from the University of New South Wales, majoring in Sociology, and has completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Change and Development at the University of Newcastle. Marlene has worked in research for 2 years, and policy and community development for 6 years.

Ms Carol Hines - is a Project Officer with the NSW Government's Behind the Label Strategy, which aims to address the issue of exploitation of factory and home based clothing workers in NSW. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Professional Writing (Journalism), Graduate Certificate in Public Relations, Graduate Diploma in Communication Management (majoring in Cross-Cultural and Organisational Communication) and Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. Carol has more than 18 years' experience in communication-based positions at work including journalism,

public relations, teaching and research. In the early 90's she spent three years in rural Japan, teaching English in government high schools and presenting interactive English teaching workshops and cross cultural communication seminars for the Akita Prefectural Board of Education. Upon her return to Australia, Carol taught ESL short courses at Monash University in Victoria to students from Indonesia, Thailand, China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Hungary and Korea. She relocated to Sydney in 1996 and joined the public sector, working as a trainer and project officer for WorkCover NSW for six years before joining the Office of Industrial Relations' Behind the Label Strategy Team. Carol's post-graduate work at UTS included research assignments into communication issues for Vietnamese refugees. She is passionate about addressing the needs of people from other cultures who settle in Australia and has a special interest in the communication, access and equity issues of people from non-native English speaking backgrounds.

Mr Kerry Murphy is an Associate solicitor with the Sydney Law firm of Craddock Murray Neumann.

For a short time he worked for the Department of Immigration and then co-ordinated the Australian Office of the Jesuit Refugee Service. He has completed a Master of Arts in Medieval Studies and a Master of International Social Development.

He maintains an immigration and refugee practice, at all stages of the process. This includes cases at primary stage, merits review, Ministerial applications, Federal Court and High Court. Most other areas of his practice are migration related including character appeals in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

He lectures in immigration and refugee law at UNSW, UTS and for the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre training courses. He writes on immigration, refugee and human rights issues for various publications.

He is also a qualified cricket umpire.

Ms Phanna Pao is the DIMIA funded CSSS worker with CAWC who is responsible for organising the Conference.

From 1994 to July 1995, she worked as a welfare worker with Burnside Khmer family program. From July 1995 to November 1997, she worked with the Khmer Community of NSW Inc. as a Grant In Aid worker. Following this, she worked with ANGLICARE as the JPET co-ordinator.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Social Administration from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur.

She has previously been involved with major projects including the Cambodian Women's Support Committee, Khmer Health Project, Beyond Survival Reclaiming Culture, Living in Harmony Project, and Khmer Child Protection Interest Group.

Ms Elisabeth Pickering is a School Counsellor/ Psychologist. She has been working with migrant and refugee students and their families for over 30 years. She is currently a School Counsellor at Cabramatta High School Intensive English Centre and Cabramatta Primary School, and working on a refugee project for the Fairfield District of the Department of Education and Training.

She has been involved in the development of a number of initiatives with the Department and community service providers to assist refugee and migrant students, including a Settling In program to support newly arrived young people. She has been involved in helping establish parent groups as part of a Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) program, which is designed to foster the successful settlement of students and their families.

She has a special interest in dealing with grief and trauma, the process of resettlement, cross-cultural counselling and assessment, and issues of access and equity for refugee and migrant youth.

Dr Eileen Pittaway is the Director of the Centre of Refugee Research University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia, and a member of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council. She has been working in the field of refugee policy for twenty-five years, focusing mainly on the needs of refugee women and their children. She represented one of the international non government organisations who successfully lobbied at the United Nations for recognition of rape in conflict situations as a war crime. In 2001 she was received an award form the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for her work with refugee women and children. Her research interests include the relationship between civil society and the United Nations. She is currently working on a major international research project examining the response of the International community to the sexual and gender based violence experienced by the majority of refugee women and many children, with a particular focus on the "Women at Risk" Program in Kenya and on the Thai Burma border. She is also conducting research into effective models of intervention with refugee families who are experiencing high levels of domestic and family violence.

Ms Nola Randall-Mohk is an Outreach Co-ordinator at Granville College of TAFE and co-ordinates educational programmes in the local community and is responsible for International Students who study at Granville. She is an experienced ESOL teacher.

She completed her Bachelor of Arts in Education at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, U.S.A. And then worked briefly in Bangladesh. Upon her return to Australia, she completed a Post Graduate Diploma in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Through her involvement in teaching at TAFE in 1982 on vocationally oriented programmes for ethnic specific groups, she became involved in the Khmer community. Since then, she has been extensively involved with many Khmer organisations in Sydney. Nola first travelled to Cambodia in 1987. Subsequently, twice a year, she acted as escort for groups of Khmer

returning to visit their families until 1992 when the United Nations began setting up elections in Cambodia. In 1993, Nola took leave without pay from TAFE, and moved to Phnom Penh for three years where she taught English at the Australian Centre for Education.

In 1996, Nola returned to work at Granville TAFE, and in 1997 undertook a further qualification, Master of Arts in Language and Literacy. Today she is going to make observations about her experiences regarding leadership within the community.

Mr Soth Tek is a Cambodian Traditional Musician. He plays the Cambodian Tror Sauw. He was born in Takeo Province. He began playing the traditional instruments in 1979 in the Thai Camp. He arrived in Australia in 1988 and he has performed at various functions with other traditional musicians here.

Dr Thong Thel came to Australia as a Columbo plan student. He is now a retired high school teacher of languages (ESL/French). Before his retirement, he worked as a LOTE Multicultural Consultant at the South Eastern Metropolitan Regional Office of the Victorian ministry of Education.

He earned his BA from the University of Phnom Penh, and he was a high school teacher in Cambodia. He has the following degrees from Monash; Dip. Ed. in Education, MA in Linguistics, and PhD in Education. He obtained his Graduate Teacher-Librarianship from Melbourne College of Advanced Education.

He is an advisor to the National Language Institute of Cambodia, and a member of the Royal Academy of Cambodia where has taught and supervised Master Programmes in Linguistics and Education since 2001.

Mr Paul Van Ryke – is currently working on a report to update the client profile and needs analysis of Khmer and other Cambodian born ethnic groups (Khmer, Rural Khmer, Khmer Krom, Khmer Chinese, Khmer Korla, Khmer Leur, Khmer Cham, Thai Dam, Kuy, Pnong and other such groups as are shown to be living in NSW). He has a consultancy service which offers a range of workshops that can be adapted to suit the needs of business, government and non-government organisations. These include Strategic Planning, organisational and service evaluation, policy development, understanding and conducting services related research, getting the most out of media and effective writing and oral presentation. Paul also evaluates services and advises on changes for better service delivery.

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ABSTRACTS

Mr Chong-Hean Ang “Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”

This presentation aims to overview how Cambodia’s war-torn situation and leadership style affect the Khmer people’s mentality.

Unfolding his own personal experience through Sihanouk, Lon Nol, Pol Pot, Heng Samrin and Hun Sen regimes, as well as his leading of and dealing with the Khmer community in NSW, the presenter will reveal some characteristics of the Khmer traditions and culture that have become major barriers preventing these people, the community and the country from moving forwards to be part of the mainstream system. How may the Khmer people and their community move forward from their current situation? Some recommendations and strategies will be suggested from a contemporary management and leadership perspective.

Ms Muntha Crowe “Can We Make a Change?”

After a long period of observation, I have seen that the quality of leadership of the older generation within the Khmer community in Melbourne (or perhaps in Australia) has been affected by the lack of communication skills, attitudes of the community members and the traditions of Khmer social skills.

As well, the seemingly “inferiority complex” of individuals greatly hinders certain developments within the community.

In my paper I will try to examine how these factors are woven together to set back some progress within the community.

Department of Industrial Relations “The NSW Government Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian Clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a more balanced life and positive future”

This paper outlines how, with the help of the community workers at the Cambodian-Australian Welfare Council of NSW, outworkers can learn more about the Strategy including recent changes to the clothing industry that affect them and, in particular, find out how to claim unpaid wages and entitlements and how to access the Vocational Education and Training opportunities that are offered. Behind the Label offers education and retraining programs such as English language classes, clothing production certificate programs and courses in other areas of work such as Child Care

and Welfare Studies that are designed and supported especially for outworkers to access. This innovative strategy sees the NSW Government at the forefront of national debate and action concerning the protection of outworkers in the clothing industry. Behind the Label offers the possibility of a bright and balanced future for those in the NSW Cambodian community who are willing to reach out and participate.

Mr Kerry Murphy “Would you believe...Facing Reality”

Working with a number of Cambodian clients who are attempting to sponsor relatives from Cambodia or with those who have been rejected and need to go to the MRT or AAT. There are some common features why cases are refused. I would like to reflect on these features why cases fail and make some positive suggestions how workers and community leaders can advise people in order to break this cycle and change these habits to obtain better migration outcomes.

Ms Elisabeth Pickering “Khmer Kids: Youth Of Today, Leaders Of Tomorrow”

This paper draws on many years of experience working with Khmer students and their families in the Cabramatta and Fairfield areas.

The paper will consider some current issues facing Khmer young people, and will offer some ideas and strategies to assist young people in moving towards a positive future.

Video material and other examples from Cabramatta High School will be presented to illustrate ways in which schools can play an important part in strengthening community, promoting healing and cultivating leadership.

Dr. Eileen Pittaway “Report on the experiences of older Khmer settlers”

There is some research evidence about the experiences of older refugees and migrants in relation to a range of countries either of origin or of settlement. However, almost all the relatively small body of work on older refugees and migrants focuses on the experiences of central Europeans in the middle to late twentieth century. Little is known about older refugees from other backgrounds despite the global numbers of displaced people continuing grown in recent decades. Little research has been undertaken in Australia on older refugees, despite there having been successive groups of refugees accepted in recent decades. This project is an exploratory qualitative study of older refugees settled in metropolitan New South Wales, using a focus group method. Community workers were also interviewed about the needs of older refugees. This paper presents findings from the project, looking particularly at the experience of **older Khmer refugees and migrants** settling in Australia, formal assistance provided and the response of the wider Australian society. Within this experience some consideration is given

to the impact of trauma on refugees' perceptions of later life. Preliminary conclusions examine potential implications for practice and policy in responding to older refugees.

Ms Marlene Henry and Ms Nola Randall-Mohk
“Spot the Leader - What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”

People working in the welfare sector providing services to groups within their sphere of influence need to have an understanding of the paradigms of leadership held by those receiving the service. This may be organisations in their development, or individuals who contribute to the organisations. If there needs to be a paradigm shift in order to operate successfully within the wider Australian community, what needs to happen?

This paper will look at the history of leadership, expectations of what leadership means to various organisations and authorities, and how this impacts on the wider Khmer community in Australia today.

Dr Thong Thel “Creating a positive future by ways of understanding life and the process of Karma”

This paper is focused on three main themes of understanding life in Buddhism, the working process of Karma, and how to shape one's own future. Different culture and belief provide different definitions and meaning to life although they have a common ground, happiness in this life and the life after. As a first step, it is better to limit the scope and meaning given to life by providing two aspects of life according to western concepts and Buddhism. It involves the definition of life by Bertrand Russell and life according to Buddhism. The second step is to present roots of problems of life based on George Carlin's wisdom and the teaching of the Buddha about the three main causes of problems of human existence. Buddhist principles of good livelihood and Gandhian decent ways of life form the third step. The last step is suggestions of remedies to the problems or ways of creating a positive future for human beings based on Buddhism and Gandhian philosophy of life.

Mr Paul VanRyke “Developing Communities, Developing Needs”

Paul will present the findings of the 2003 Khmer communities' needs assessment to date. A profile drawn from the 2001 census will explore the particular demographic nature of the communities as compared with the general Australian population and has a few surprises in store. He will also present the findings from his extensive consultation with members of the community through a series of focus groups which reveal more similarities than perhaps is expected in the concerns of various parts of the community. Parenting and family relationships are central to the concerns emerging, and the findings explore the factors that impact on these. Finally he will suggest some areas that the community may want to pursue to address the concerns raised.

CAMBODIAN-AUSTRALIAN WELFARE COUNCIL OF NSW INC

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PROCEEDINGS

Ms Diana Giese – MC

Welcome – *Mr Chong-Hean Ang*,
Chairperson

Aboriginal Welcome - *Mr Merv Donovan*,
Gumbaingerr Aboriginal Nation

Keynote Address

“Putting the Heart Back into the Cambodian People”

Professor Maurice Eisenbruch

Director, Centre for Multicultural Health, University of New South
Wales

“Khmer kids: Youth of today, leaders of tomorrow”

Ms Elisabeth Pickering

School Counsellor / Psychologist,
Department of Education

“Can We Make a Change?”

Ms Muntha Crowe

Khmer Service, Radio Australia, ABC.

Question time

Morning Tea

Performance

Mr Soth Tek

Cambodian Traditional Musician

“Would you believe... facing reality”

Mr Kerry Murphy

Associate Solicitor

Craddock Murray Neumann

“Developing Communities, Developing Needs”

Mr Paul VanRyke

Researcher

Questions

Lunch - Cambodian

Newam Trosok (Cucumber Salad)

Mee sooh sut mwun (bean thread salad with chicken)

Mee Bompornng (Vegetarian noodles with torfu, tomato, mixed sauce)

Sweet biscuits and fruit

Tea and coffee

“Bringing Back the Angkor Spirit”

Mr Chong-Hean Ang

Senior Manager of South Western Sydney Region

UnitingCare Burnside

”Spot the Leader”

What does the Khmer community recognise as leadership?”

Ms Marlene Henry

Multicultural Access Project Worker

Fairfield City Council

and

Ms Nola Randall-Mohk

Outreach & International Student Co-ordinator

Granville College of TAFE

Afternoon Tea

Panel Discussion – Chaired by Di Murray

Acting Institute Director, SWS Institute of TAFE

Dept of Industrial Relations – The NSW Government Behind the Label Strategy: Helping Cambodian clothing sweatshop & home based workers find a more balanced life and positive future”

Dr Eileen Pittaway

Research on Khmer Elderly

Dr Thel Thong

(Creating a positive future by ways of understanding life and the process of Karma)

Collect Issue Cards and Evaluations

(Participants to note three main issues arising from today)

Vote of Thanks

Close