**President Report July 2019**

**03/08/2019 Saturday 9:00 am , Girrawheen Hub**

We’ve been through to the month of August. Time is flying. Technology is at its fastest rate. So is the our society. We need to be vigilant, alert and ready. We are living in this changeable world with unchangeable truth. “ *When you know the truth, the truth will set you free*. ” Most of us living here can live more or less comfortably compare to those who are struggling back in our homeland. Please let me remind everyone of us as we are working for the noble cause of our people. I realise that we sometimes feel like quitting when we are ignored, ridiculed, criticised and even accused of self-seeking. Remember many great people suffered more than we do. We are doing many things for them with our precious time, expenses, energy and integrity. They will smile at you when there is a need. Then they may stab at your back. Just forgive and forget though it’s really hard to do.

We need someone to confide with, one shoulder to cry on, one hand to lean to, in the darkest time of sorrow. We are sometimes like scaffold that required building a monument. Everyone knows what will happen to the scaffold when the job is done. But do it. Just cast your bread on the water. A few days before his assassination Dr Martin Luther King said a prophetic word to his black people,” *I* *can foresee the promised land but I won’t enter*.” It came true. Those who are fishing, holidaying and enjoying the benefits may say that we are foolish. But never lose your hearts.

**April Moo**

You are doing your best for everyone. KWA is getting more prestige through your guidance and tireless endeavour.

**Joansy Pegrum**

We are proud of you and your tireless work and most of all unyielding spirit. KWA gets network to the world through your wonderful effort. Congratulation for your successful trip visiting Karen comunties in USA.

**Paul Henney**

Thank you so much for your tactful approaches in recruiting new members of value

**Jonathan Pochu**

You are our only recognised interpreter cum Karen translator with big heart in giving out your best to the community.

**The team**

Without your selfless contribution and participation KWA won’t simply exist. You are wonderful.

As you know I flew to Burma on 23/05/2019 and back on 21/06/2019. My trip is tiring but worthy. I met many people, visiting many churches, organisations, businesses and political party discussing Karen cause. I came across Karen vocational training schools in Tavoy and Rangoon. I talked to one agri-food enterprise, construction company, overseas skilled workers agency, YMCA and church organisations.

There is always the dark side of the coin. A few restaurants dress their waitpersons in Karen tunics rather than uniform bearing their logos and names. Teashop culture is deep-rooted in Burma as a centre of business and relaxation. Many businesses exploit our young generation as cheap labour and could also be named as slave-labour. They have to work long hours ( against ILO standard ) with minimum wages. Honestly speaking those under-aged were sold by their own parents through Karen brokers signing contracts for one year. Some parents took the cash for one more year before the contract termination.

Some Pwo Karen leaders founded Pwo Karen Vocational Centre VTC in Brayton Church complex training young people hospitality which is booming at the moment in Burma. I saw the full scale hotel room with shower, beds, furniture and linen in the centre. That 10-week course includes 2 weeks on the job ( work experience at existing hotel in Rangoon .) Tailoring training is conducted by Mrs Eh Ku ( guitarist Saw Boy ). At the end of the training Malaysian counterparts oversee the examination. The contract was signed for those who were eligible. Their strategy is providing the young people with at least one SKILL to make a living. I keep their reports at hand.

At the lunch, VTC officials discussed the consequences and result of their highly cost effort. The kids were earning good salary compare to Burma. Starving themselves in Malaysia they sent home as much as they could. Before they left, their household expense was about K 100,000 ( AUD 100$ ). When the kids were working in Malaysia the expense became double. They told me the stories of many kids working like slaves for years overseas. When they returned home there was no saving.

The reason is we are lack of “ Cash Management “. I saw many needs in my community. We have to educate them a lot on “ Self-esteem, time, work and cash management “.

Karen churches in Burma have been practicing “ Asking donation “ for centuries. I’m glad that I got some invitations from some churches in Burma to give them awareness. We need to meet on regular basis and have fellowship to build our community. Even the siblings of same parents could get estranged with meeting each other for a long time.

Mr Bryce of City of Wanneroo gave me a visit on 15/07/2019 Monday sharing information about Wanneroo museum in November. I’m going to meet with CEO of the Baptistcare next week. I’ll be visiting Albany next Saturday 11/08/2019 for the Karen Martyrs’ day. I got invitation from Darwin to mentor them in building community.

***Saw Moo Eh, newly elected president of AKO, Vic called me to work together especially for the MKO. He’ll give a 5 minute-greeting on 03/08/2019 KWA monthly meeting at 9:30 am.***

**Suggestion**

I’d like KWA to organise one Karen Gathering possibly at the Carey College one Saturday with very simple finger food and drink inviting some MPs, Senators and honouring our elders at the same time.