



## Sixteenth Meeting

### FreeSchools World Literacy Australia

DATE commencing: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008 TIME: 9 am  
DATE completion: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008 TIME: 9 pm

INTERNET VENUE: FreeSchools Literacy Australia email network  
[fswl-australia@googlegroups.com](mailto:fswl-australia@googlegroups.com)

### Minutes of the Meeting

1. Rollcall of members and others present and apologies.

There were 5 participants in attendance  
Robert Coenraads (President)  
Ben Bowler (Vice President)  
Merindi Belarski (Treasurer)  
Kathleen Swadling (Committee Member)  
Judy Townsend  
Sue Tennant

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Fifteenth meeting were sent to each member of the committee and were accepted by the committee  
Moved by Ben Bowler and Seconded by Merindi Swadling

3. Reports from the Committee.

The Committee received the President's Report

#### PRESIDENTS REPORT

The work of Judy and Joanna Townsend on behalf of FreeSchools World Literacy in these last few months in preparing for their Thailand visit provides us with an excellent case study (see below for the full story). It reveals the fruits that dedicated and caring individuals can harvest when motivated by a powerful and highly attractive cause. The generosity of the local community, and especially the schoolchildren, to the FreeSchools cause was overwhelming. These amazing results come from just a small community to the north of Sydney where Judy lives and works. I like to imagine that these are a taste of what may come when we bring our cause to the attention of greater Sydney and the rest of Australia.

Thank you both again for your efforts. And thanks again to all of the committee and visitors for taking the time to participate this weekend.

Dr. Robert Coenraads  
President,  
FreeSchools World Literacy - Australia

#### 4. Progress in Thailand.

**Paul Garrioch:** Regarding the gifts to bring: Any stationary would be useful. Pens, pencils, paper, notebooks,... Also toothbrushes, toothpaste. Children's toys that are good for development – i.e., stuff that develops coordination, sports equipment, or puzzles, etc that develops thinking ability.

Also regarding the trip in January – please remember the Mirror seminar that is on from 17 to 23 Jan – I think we have discussed all that, but just want to remind you.

**Judy:** Dear Paul and Sue, The upcoming trip to Thailand made the local paper on Friday and has caused a huge amount of interest. I have had calls from local schools wanting to help, local businesses and from Rotary and Lions Clubs. One call - from Rotary did cause some concern. They sponsored a little boy called Safari who was badly burnt in Africa and came to Australia for surgery. The Central Coast "adopted" the cause and now his whole village is supported by a charity founded here. They said they have tremendous difficulty with customs and taxes when they send supplies to the village and they were wondering had I put systems in place to ensure we would not arrive in Chiang Rai with our very valuable educational and hygiene supplies and face a hefty tax/customs bill.

I told them that The Mirror Foundation was going to pick up everything at Chiang Rai Airport, but they said from experience that it was better to buy everything in Thailand. For us, this is not possible as our donations are in kind. Businesses and schools have collected hundreds of tubes of toothpaste, toothbrushes, dictionaries, pencils, paper - and we have only let everyone know about it on Friday. We are certain we will be overwhelmed by the response. We will be travelling with the supplies which I think helps.

One school on the Coast has decided to make you their Christmas Charity and will donate money - but I don't know how to give them a receipt. If I email you all the details once the money comes can you give them a Mirror Foundation receipt and I will give you the money when I arrive? I know it is a lovely problem to have - too much support - but I thought I had better set it up properly in the beginning rather than get into a mess as I go along. Thai Airways has also contacted Jo wanting the flight number from Bangkok to Chiang Rai - which of course we haven't booked!

So - time to get the flights booked and paid for and this time Sue I will email you before I pay! Will we be of any use to you Paul if we arrive at Chiang Rai before Sue? We don't want to be a nuisance - we are coming to be of service. Jo could film some of your schools while we wait for Sue, or we could do some background shots. Remember I am a teacher so any teaching duties would be welcomed. If it helps you we could disappear for a few days and be tourists while we wait - very flexible. The frustration of the early flight booking still causes me so much worry. At least it made us come and avoid the conference dates.

Hope this finds you all well.

- Robert - Jo's contact at Thai Airways is tenuous at best. The PA emails her with requests and Jo replies. They have assured her that all will be well, but it is certainly a difficult job getting a weight waiver. I am getting the DVD copied this week so other schools can watch it as well. The word is spreading.

- Paul - I assume you can blow up soccer balls if we bring them flat? Let us know about the receipts.

- Sue - can't wait to see you. The DVD with you on it made me want to grab you and go for a coffee and a catch up! Australia has entered the global credit crisis as well, but people have been extremely keen on helping FreeSchools and I have done nothing but explain the concept since it hit the papers. I have just been interrupted by Gosford Playgroup that wants to make FreeSchools the recipient of their Christmas Wishing tree this year. I am giving them the photo of the kids in the school with the yellow packing crates. It is a great photo.

Love to you all - you are wonderful people to know and we are sure the Central Coast will become big supporters. Hugs to you Sue.

**Sue:** Dear Judy (cc: Robert/Paul)

You're dynamite and I love and thank you so much for your passionate leadership in getting support for FreeSchools on the Australian Central Coast. I'd love you to be here in Canada and wonder how come you live on the other side of the world! Everything you're doing is great. I'm not sure about the tax levy on extra weight going into Thailand. Paul, I hope you're able to work that out with the airlines. FSWLCanada can issue tax receipts but it would be better if FSWLAustralia did it. Where do we stand on that Robert?

Judy, all your efforts are inspiring and stellar. Please keep rallying support from this part of Australia. There is so much more we need to do with the Thai FreeSchools.

Thank you dear Judy for all that you are doing. I can hardly wait to show you my favourite breakfast stall in Fang and the air-conditioned gourmet coffee place across the street from which we plan our day. Compared to Bihar (India), Fang is heaven on earth.

**Paul:** Thanks so much for your efforts and gathering all that support.

Issues:

- The weight limit on the plane – if you end up getting so much stuff that you are over your weight limit, you may have to pay excess baggage fees. Possible solution – take a copy of the newspaper article to the Thai Airways office and explain to them what you are doing and that you have more stuff than expected and can they help. There is a good chance that they will help you and waive the excess baggage fees.
- Duty into Thailand. Maybe some of the goods have an import duty???? If so, when entering Thailand you should pay something for them. Maybe a few options around this:
  1. Again take the newspaper article to the Thai embassy and explain what you are doing. Ask them can they help by giving you a letter explaining the goods are donations. They will probably want to help, and particularly since the media has reported the event, I don't think they'll want to be seen to be getting in the way. Worth a try.
  2. If you can't get to the Thai embassy, just print off an official looking document from someone to say the stuff is donations. Just in case you need that. May come in handy
  3. Are you flying on a connecting flight to Chiang Rai? Can you check in the baggage through to Chiang Rai when you check in, in Australia? If so, there probably won't be a problem, because no one really checks for customs stuff at Chiang Rai airport.
  4. If you are flying into Bangkok airport – actually usually no one really checks your bags or asks questions there either (although they might if you wheel through 20 large boxes). If they do, you can pull out the letters from point 1 or 2 and try to use that – it may well be enough. The customs officials probably won't want to stop donations coming in.
  5. I will check with Khun Moo on Monday to see if she has any more experience / ideas on this.

Blow up soccer balls – yes.

If you get to Chiang Rai before Sue – no problem – we can show you around and maybe find some things for you to do. Please remind us closer to the date – as to when you are arriving. Thanks again. Look forward to meeting you.

**Judy:** Thai Airways rang today to say we have the weight waiver. I wrote to the Thai Embassy to ask about getting a letter stating that the educational/hygiene supplies that we were bringing with us were donated and for FreeSchools and the Mirror Foundation and they said to ask FreeSchools or Mirror to apply for the letter in Thailand. They rang and were supposed to email me with the address today but nothing came so I will phone them tomorrow.

To get the weight waiver we had to book our leg to Chiang Rai so we are coming on 6th Jan on the 1.50pm flight out of Bangkok. We can't leave Bangkok airport as we have to accompany the luggage so we are staying at the airport overnight in one of the airport motels. Don't have a return date to Bangkok as yet. Will worry about that later - we will have virtually no weight to worry about by then!

Lots more stationary arrived today and an offer of wool to knit more blankets. We will bring stationary in preference to blankets but we hope to manage both somehow! Still can't believe it is actually happening - hope all goes well now after that dreadful beginning.

Will keep you informed and let you know what letter they may want you to get from the Thai officials. I presume it is all about customs duties etc. I think it will just mean an email. There have been several people wanting to donate \$15 after they see the DVD but I don't know what to do about receipts. Can you help me Paul?

In a rush - thrilled we have the weight waiver - now have to figure out how best to use it for the kids.

**Sue:** Great news that you got the weight waiver. Congratulations on doing such a wonderful job for FreeSchools! This is not Mirror's responsibility but a FreeSchools' project and hopefully FSWL-Australia will help with the details. All the data (especially email addresses) regarding people giving a \$15 donation should be sent to Merindi (see copy). She will need to enter all the details into her data base. FSWL-Australia may not yet have charitable tax status, but they can still send out receipts.

Robert, are you able to email a letter to Thai Airways to help facilitate the donations from Australia?

**Robert:** Merindi, I will also donate \$15 to the cause - but you will have to lend it to me until I get back from overseas in mid December, and pay it on my behalf - thanks.

Merindi, would you please be able to assist with any necessary communications with Thai Airways on behalf of the absent Australian president of FSWL

I am currently in Venezuela visiting family here writing from an internet cafe in the middle of nowhere (a very strange experience indeed). The trip to Venezuela is a great experience for the kids who are getting to see many of their cousins for the first time.

**Judy:** Venezuela! Your kind offer of the \$15 is not needed because you have been SO wonderful getting information and the DVD to me. I sent a copy of it to our local senior college - hopefully FreeSchools will become a charity that they have heard of now. That is the main reason for our enthusiasm - spreading the word. I am a bit annoyed at the Thai Embassy as they said they would email me all the information for FreeSchools to get the customs tax/duties etc in hand - and it has not arrived. I rang on Friday about 2pm and the phone rang out. They must leave early on a Fridays. I have written them a letter and enclosed the article from the paper, some photos of Sue's (the packing shed ones) and an information sheet that I made up from your web site. I included the web link as well. All I asked for was a letter verifying that the supplies were donated - but all they have told me is to get it from Thailand not Australia and that they would email me the info for FreeSchools to use. Hopefully Monday.

I sent the background info around the Teacher/Librarians list serve - which goes to most school libraries in NSW - so here's hoping the word will spread there as well. Not one person that I have spoken to had heard of FreeSchools - but they have now!

Enjoy your trip and thanks again for getting everything to us.

We arrive in Chaing Rai on the 6th Jan and we are aiming at bringing lots and lots of suitcases full of educational/hygiene supplies and maybe some sponsorship as well. Not sure what cameras Jo has organised. Do you think we should do some filming here in Australia before we go - forging the link etc

**Judy:** All goes very well over here. As you know we have booked our flights to Chiang Rai - Flight no TG130 - arriving 3.10 local time - 6th Jan. We understand you will be busy, so let us know what to do on arrival. Happy to organise ourselves - with your suggestions of taxi etc.

We have a wonderful problem this end. The local schools have embraced the idea of FreeSchools very generously and we have 'mountains' of school/hygiene supplies. I have not even put it into our school newsletter because we will be swamped. Jo is negotiating with Australia Post and her Ch9 courier company and she needs the FreeSchools street address

as well as your courier address - i.e. with phone contact number (Chiang Rai) and contact person and correct names etc.

We have hundreds of packets of brand new pens, pencils, erasers, coloured pencils, new exercise books, project/sketch books, rulers, padded mouse mats (for sitting on the packing crates - or taking outside for an instant outdoor classroom), toothbrushes, tubes of toothpaste, plus misc. odd donations of shapes, charts, ed games etc. If you require them we have lots of second hand children's picture dictionaries (some new ones but not many). We will be able to bring some of the supplies with us - but we are unsure of the extent of our weight waiver as it depends on the flight bookings on the day, - some of it will be taken up with Jo's camera gear.

The word FreeSchools is being heard all over the Central Coast and next year with the ability to give receipts we think we will have another big drive, but concentrate on money donations. If we get great photos and footage for promotional needs this time, it will make everything easier next year. This year is all about image and getting the world to hear about FreeSchools.

Sue, can you tell us what we need to do about accommodation? If you let us know where you're likely to stay in Chiang Rai, Jo will book it via the net or Skype. I presume India has become too difficult? Hopefully Bangkok Airport will improve as we have to stay overnight there on the 5th while we wait for our flight the next day to Chiang Rai. It seems trouble follows us at the moment!

We also need a heads up on our clothing requirements. Obviously we will be respectful in our dress, but we want to bring as much of the ed supplies as possible and thought we might use our luggage weight for the kids stuff and buy some clothes over there. Feel free to offer any advice - even if it sounds trivial.

Must go, looking forward to seeing you very soon Sue. Jo has a bit to add, Love Judy Hi Paul/Sue - Jo here - I need some info for my stories I plan to do in Thailand. What teachers do you have at FreeSchools in Chiang Rai? Westerners (as co-ordinators)? Do you have any Australian helpers there? With regards kids, how well do they speak English? I've started pitching lots of stories to non-Channel Nine sources too, but editors are asking for details of the what I'll get over there. Perhaps I could have the email address of someone to speak to such as a teacher or co-ordinator there ... or is that you Paul? I understand the point of FreeSchools is to allow locals to teach locals ... but quite a few ppl such as women's magazines here (for features) have asked for details for "women like us" type stories (typical western media requirement!!) Let me know the set-up there so I can better pitch a few print stories. Also, as well as the classrooms, can you start sussing out some local homes/community areas/ natural landscapes that I'll be able to film, and get stills photos.

BTW, response so far has been fantastic - as soon as we're able to give out receipts in Oz next year, I am confident of using the articles/segments to get donations which is great.

**Sue:** Dear Judy and Jo, I am so relieved that you are not freaked out by the protest in Thailand. Your enthusiasm is wonderful and all the goodies and support you are bringing to this project are simply awesome.

Derek and I are on our way to Florida to visit his family, so email is a bit hit and miss.

Regarding accommodations in Chiang Rai. I was comfortable and happy at the Golden Triangle Inn in Chiang Rai (recommended in Lonely Planet) because it is a short walk from the bus station (I arrived from Fang by bus) and restaurants and the price is right. After India it seemed luxurious to me - clean and quiet with a car rental/travel agency on the premises. Plus they spoke good English. I was there in June 2007 so it was not busy.

I'm hoping that someone from Mirror can arrange for you to tour their facilities (about a half hour drive from Chiang Rai). You may want to visit more than once to really get insights into the challenges that hill tribes and Burmese refugees face and how Mirror is responding. The topics of trafficking women and children, drug abuse and the perils of HIV are all related to illiteracy and poverty but are not subjects easily broached. However, from my own research, I've learned that hill tribes and Burmese refugees are the most vulnerable group in Thailand.

Fang (most of the FreeSchools are in this area) is a 3-hour bus trip away. The scenery is great. But you could also take a long boat river trip to Tha Ton ( a few minutes by car from Fang) and visit hill tribe villages along the way - touristy but I would think a great learning experience. If you can pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's guide to Thailand, it gives many suggestions of wonderful things to do in this area. The photos you take will be very helpful for the news story.

My friend Ella in Delhi is making my flight arrangements to Bangkok. It's a least \$300 cheaper for her to do it from India. But she's having a tough time getting me seats so my dates are not yet confirmed. Hopefully I'll have more information in my next email.

Jo please see answers in red to your questions below.

What teachers do you have at FreeSchools in Chiang Rai?

We don't have FreeSchools in Chiang Rai, only in the Fang area (Chiang Mai province, close to the Burmese border, 3 hours away by bus, one and a half by car). However Mirror is located just outside Chiang Rai. Jadad works for Mirror and is the supervisor of the FreeSchools, visiting once or twice per month. A question to flesh out of the Mirror people is "How have the FreeSchools evolved since Mirror took over management and supervision of the schools?"

Westerners (as co-ordinators)? Do you have any Australian helpers there?

Ben and Jildou were wonderful volunteers for FreeSchools for almost a year but FreeSchools could not continue to pay their living expenses and Mirror had the expertise and language facility to manage the schools and our future growth. Ben and Jildou are still living in the Fang area (working on another project) and we will be able to visit and interview them.

With regards kids, how well do they speak English?

No FreeSchools students speak English well - maybe a few words. Our mission is to teach them Thai language skills and mathematics to the extent that they can communicate in Thai and even enroll and succeed in formal schools. Hill tribes each have their own language and culture and without Thai they remain isolated from Thai society and vulnerable to exploitation.

I've started pitching lots of stories to non-Channel Nine sources too, but editors are asking for details of the what I'll get over there. Perhaps I could have the email address of someone to speak to such as a teacher or co-ordinator there ... or is that you Paul?

Paul is Australian and his first language is English. He is a teacher and married to a Thai. If it were not for Paul, we would not have been able to approach Mirror to take on the long-term management of the FreeSchools. There are others at Mirror who speak English as their second language. After the Mirror people, the people to talk to about the history of FreeSchools and about individual teachers and students would be Pui (a government schoolteacher in Fang who helped establish the first FreeSchools. But I have experienced miscommunication with Pui, which may be cultural. Ben is Australian and Jildou is Dutch with English as her second language. After that we need a translator who has some facility with tribal languages. It's a tall order.

I understand the point of FreeSchools is to allow locals to teach locals ... but quite a few ppl such as women's magazines here (for features) have asked for details for "women like us" type stories (typical western media requirement!!)

There are a billion illiterate adults in the world and two thirds of them are women. We miss out on their potential social and economic contribution until literacy changes everything. Studies show huge benefits when a girl reaches a Grade 5 education in a developing country. The main question to ask is this. Can literacy stop exploitation? Bihar, India and northern Thailand are two of the worst areas in the world for the trafficking of women and children. - the most lucrative global (illegal) enterprise after arms and drugs. What happens to these people? Girls as young as 8 years old end up on very continent around the world as bonded servants, slave labourers working in dangerous industries, child soldiers trained to maim and kill and sex workers in brothels throughout Asia, Europe and North America. Illiteracy and poverty go hand in hand, But it's women and children who pay the greater penalty, suffering in silence - with no rights and no way to change their situation. They struggle with many challenges - the domination and abuse of men, abandonment, unemployment, health risks, and the threat of trafficking are just some. They have no voice to tell the world of their plight

and so their silence makes it easy for "women like us" and the rest of the world to ignore it. But once you see it for yourself, it's hard to turn your back on it.

The "women like us" story is more Jildou working in the field as a volunteer or Judy embracing the challenge after a house exchange. A key reason FreeSchools works is due to a mutual relationship of confidence and trust with the Field Partners. This will be my first visit to Thailand since Mirror took over. In June 2007, I only spoke with Paul for about a half hour and had lunch and a tour for about an hour and a half. That brief encounter eventually evolved into a partnership. The fact is one has to go with gut feelings and common goals when you only have a few days to visit.

Let me know the set-up there so I can better pitch a few print stories. Also, as well as the classrooms, can you start sussing out some local homes/community areas/ natural landscapes that I'll be able to film, and get stills photos.

Brennan O'Connor (Toronto) is the only professional photographer to have stayed in a tribal village with a FreeSchool. He did a profile on Darin (student) and a teacher from the same village. I can give you the background of this story but I'd have to contact Brennan for in depth detail. He was very gentle, respectful and non-invasive and has given us permission to use any of his photos. Unfortunately this kind of access takes a lot of time and patience. Brennan has been to Thailand many times just to photograph hill tribes and he was the one who introduced me to Mirror. I can put you in touch with him directly as he's probably the most experienced person to talk to.

**Judy:** The first 35 kg of supplies in two PO boxes are on their way to you Paul. They are going airmail so we expect them to get to you next week - but I suppose Christmas mail could slow them down. Here's hoping they arrive safely.

We don't really know what to expect when we arrive. Do you know when you are arriving Sue. Is there anything that we could do to be useful while we wait? Please line up jobs no matter how menial as we might as well be put to work. I am assuming all is OK for charging camera batteries where you are Paul, but what about when we go out to the FreeSchools? Will we be OK as we only speak English? Feel a bit overwhelmed without you Sue! We will be looking forward to your arrival. Also very happy to be tourists and get out of everyone's hair while we wait. I have your list of suggestions somewhere Sue. Hope your plans for India go well.

Can you please give us suggestions for clothing? Light trousers and walking shoes/sandals? Jo may have to have some things that are a bit fancier if she is to be on camera.

Robert or Paul, we need a letter from you asking us to bring educational/hygiene supplies with us, or thanking us for bringing educational/hygiene supplies whatever you think is best. (You obviously know we don't want thanking - it is just to have your official letter.)

Must away - am supposed to be sending Christmas cards and they will end up being New year's cards the way I am going. Let us know if the boxes arrive.

**Robert:** I'll prepare a letter for you from the President of FSWL-Australia and email it today.

*Mrs. Judy Townsend  
Bateau Bay, NSW 2261, Australia*

*Dear Judy,*

*Please feel free to use this letter to inform Thai authorities your reasons for bringing educational and hygiene supplies into Thailand. Thank you again for your efforts in collecting these donated goods and bringing them into Thailand on behalf of FreeSchools World Literacy.*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Mrs. Judy Townsend and her daughter Joanna will be bringing a variety of educational and hygiene items, such as dictionaries, books, pencils, uniforms etc, into Thailand during January 2008.*

*The Townsend's are representatives of FreeSchools World Literacy and are bringing the educational supplies into Thailand on behalf of our charity for distribution to disadvantaged students that are attending a number of schools that we are sponsoring in northern Thailand. The goods that are being brought into Thailand have been donated to FreeSchools World Literacy by Australian schoolchildren for that purpose. Thai Airways have generously provided free carriage for the goods that are accompanying Judy and Joanne Townsend. These goods will only be used for charitable purposes and will not be sold.*

*If you have any further questions regarding these educational supplies or the work of FreeSchools World Literacy in Thailand, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Dr. Robert R. Coenraads*

*President*

*FreeSchools World Literacy – Australia*

*8 Trigalana Place, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086 Australia*

*Ph: 61-2-9451 8496; Mob: 61-408 419 632*

*Email: coenraads01@optusnet.com.au*

**Judy:** Thanks Robert, it is marvellous. Just what we will need to go with our on board luggage. With Australia Post's help it has made our journey a lot easier. We had 35 kg all ready to post but there was a bit of space in the top of the boxes so I sent extra toothpaste, exercise books and pencils with Jo to the parcels centre. They were wonderful and allowed the extra and gave us airmail. Jo still has a bout 10 tubes of toothpaste that she didn't want to squash in and a few packets of paper. I think we will be left with about 20 kg which we can't take so I will see if I can fundraise to get some more postage.

It is very difficult to get photos of the kids packing up the stuff - I took some in my library and they look pretty ordinary. Jo working in Sydney and the children going to school up here obviously doesn't help either. We will learn as we go along and your letter is just what I was hoping to receive. It is all printed out and I will put one in with the stuff we are taking and one in with our passports.

**Sue:** Dear Judy, You've just done a stellar job of getting real tangible gifts for the FreeSchools students. What a tremendous contribution you are making to these Thai FreeSchools! Thank you so much.

I've been in Thailand in November and June and both times it was sweltering hot for me. Since I travel with carry-on luggage only and I'll be 4 weeks in India and Thailand, I'm taking layers. I'm taking black Danskin pants (extremely light), black Capri pants, black jeans, plus a black jean long skirt for Delhi. The tops range from pink & white blouses to black woolly vest and a shell cycling jacket. Everything is black, white or pink so they all fit together. I'm taking thin long ski underwear to wear to bed under a nightie and one pair each of running shoes and sandals. Hope this helps.

I hope to have a confirmed arrival date early next week. The best use of your time is to visit and get to know (in depth) what's going on with the Mirror Foundation and how that relates to FreeSchools, and what the real issues are with Hill Tribes.

I only speak English and have been able to get by so don't worry about that. Paul, Judy and Jo are extremely bright people, highly qualified and motivated to help others. They can do a lot for you at Mirror. Please talk to Kung Moo about what they can do. Or might it be a good idea to connect them with Paul from the Montessori project?

Otherwise Judy, get Lonely Planet's guide for things to do in Bangkok or Chiang Rai and just let the adventure unfold.

Wish I could be there sooner but you will have unique experiences that my not being there will create. Hope this helps.



**Paul:** Hi – yeah the gifts sound fantastic.

The weather here at the moment is cold at night and in the morning (by our standards and I think comparing to Australian summer). But daytime temperatures are very pleasant.

We are very interested in utilizing you guys as much as possible. We'll arrange a meeting when you are here (as soon after you arrive as possible) to figure out what you are interested in and what we can get you involved in. We'll try to help you guys learn as much as you like about whatever you are interested in. We don't want your visit to go to waste either. I don't know you yet or your intentions and ideas and likes and dislikes. You guys don't really know us and what we do and what it is like around here – so it is hard to know what to do with you also – but maybe that can all be quickly sorted out after we meet and once you've had a quick look around.

Paul and the Montessori project – that is this: <http://www.khomloy.org/>

Ha ha – about Lonely Planet for Chiang Rai – don't bother, there isn't much in there and we can help point you in all sorts of directions.

English is OK – don't worry.

Charging batteries – no problem. Both here and in Fang.

Don't worry about anything – we'll look after you.

Oh – the letter – I will remind Moo about that.

OK, hope you are all well.

## 5. Progress in India

**Sister Crescence:** Letter from India

*Dear Robert Coenraads,*

*I feel delighted to extend X' Mas wishes and compliments from self and our students and staff of Free Schools. When Christmas is coming closer, isn't it great that 1200 students filled with joy send you greetings of love, Christmas tells us that Christ once again affirms the world His promises to bring peace and deliverance to people of good heart and specially to those who have been deprived of justice and love. Our free school children have indeed experience Christ's love through you my friends and through us in past 7-8 years, They treasure this love in their own way*

*This year, our children of every center are preparing to celebrate Christmas on 23rd December. The Santa Clause will visit every center and give every child colourful balloons and cakes and toffees. Imagine the joy of the children*

*Once again wish you joyous Christmas and prosperous New Year.*

*I request you to remember our brethren of Orissa, Maharashtra, Mumbai, after long suffering will not be able to celebrate X' Mas with their dear ones at their houses. With the assurance of my own prayers, I conclude this letter of mine.*

*Please remember us in all your valuable prayers.*

*Yours truly in Lord Jesus,*

*Sister Crescence, SSH  
Sr. Superior  
Sacred Heart Convent  
Bettiah West Champaran  
Bihar INDIA*

*Kindly also forward this letter your loving friend Mr. Allan Platcher.*

## 6. General Business.

The following discussion took place during the meeting and is recorded here:

### **FSWL Charitable Status**

**Kathleen:** Hi Mins and Robert, I want to set up a schedule payment as a donation to FreeSchools. We'd like to donate \$15 a month, which will be \$180 a year. Put it toward the greatest needs. Can you please send me the bank details so I can set it up as an automatic payment? Cheers.

**Robert:** This is an important milestone - the receipt of the first monthly commitment to FSWL by means of a monthly direct deposit, and the beginnings of a continuous income source for our charity.

The bank details are as follows:

Account Name: FreeSchools World Literacy Inc.

BSB: 032-196 (Mona Vale Branch)

Acc. No. 26-6690

On behalf of the Committee, I thank you for your support..

### **FSWL Australian Website and Communications**

**Ian:** Re Web Site: Over the next couple of weeks I will be able to do some work on this if no one has already started. There seemed to be some information already done which I don't have a copy of. PowerPoint presentation was one I remembered that may be useful.

### **FSWL Publicity**

## 7. Set date and time for COM meeting. Close meeting

Meetings of the Committee of FSWL Australia will be held on the first Friday of each month. We will not meet in January 2009 this year, as several of the Committee have informed me that they will be away during this time.

The next official meeting will be from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2009.

I would like to thank the Committee of Management for all of its efforts during 2008 and I wish you every success for 2009.

For Judy, Jo and Sue travelling to Thailand this January – on behalf of the Committee of FreeSchools World Literacy – Australia, I wish you all the best – may your journey be safe and successful.

## END OF MINUTES

## APPENDIX REPORTS

### **The FSWL Committee - Australian Contact Details**

ROBERT COENRAADS President of FSWL Australia  
8 Trigalana Place Frenchs Forest NSW 2086,  
coenraads01@optusnet.com.au  
(02) 9451 8496

BEN BOWLER Vice President of FSWL Australia  
58 Lisbeth Ave Donvale Vic 3111  
ben.bowler@bigpond.com  
0403 023 432

IAN ESMORE Public Officer of FSWL Australia  
Daylesford Design Studio, PO Box 335, Daylesford 3460  
daylesforddesign@bigpond.com  
(03) 5348 1077

DELPHINE SWADLING Secretary of FSWL Australia  
44 Dodds St Redhead NSW 2290  
Delphine@mumnubhampers.com.au  
Mobile: 0438443834. Home: (02) 49449550

MERINDI BELARSKI Treasurer of FSWL Australia  
5 Merelyn Road, Belrose NSW 2085  
merindi@bigpond.net.au  
Mobile: 044 898 3393

DONNA CERVANTES Committee Member of FSWL Australia  
26 Verney Street, Kings Beach, Caloundra, 4551  
windmilldc@yahoo.com  
Mobile 0416865263, Home (07)54931201

KATHLEEN SWADLING Committee Member of FSWL Australia  
7 Walsh Street Narrabeen NSW  
swadling@bigpond.net.au  
(02) 9913 7893

BETTY LYON Committee Member of FSWL Australia  
65 Old Road, Franklin TAS 7113  
raylyon@gmail.com (03) 6266 3554