



Media Release

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AUSTimber goes to school in Laos

Children in a small village in northern Laos, in one of the poorest primary schools, can now attend school with new satchels and rulers sent to them from Mount Gambier by the AUSTimber08 organisers. The AUSTimber satchels and rulers were distributed to the Year 5 and 6 students at the village school. The supplies were plentiful and also given to the students at the high school in the neighbouring village.

Steve Midgley, who acted as Chairman for the main AUSTimber08 conference in Mount Gambier, has spent a significant part of his forestry career working in Laos and Steve's wife, Dao, is engaged in community work in that country. At Steve's suggestion the AUSTimber organisers sent satchels and rulers remaining from the conference to Dao for use in her village development work in Ban Kok Gniew, northern Laos.

Seng Dao SSS (Small Simple Satisfaction) Project is a one-to-one NGO established by Dao Midgley and the work she does includes the refurbishment of the primary school buildings, building of water supplies and support for 19 children from disadvantaged families to attend school and vocational training for four teenagers.

"Seng Dao SSS Project is grateful for the support provided by AustTimber08 and particularly thanks David Quill and Stephen Midgley for their generous and forward thinking to contribute the rulers and satchels to one of the poorest primary schools in Luang Prabang district. The teachers, students and village officers all appreciated the gifts. Small targeted contributions can make a good contribution to basic education" said DAO Midgley from Seng Dao SSS Project.

David Quill, General Manager AUSTimber08 and AUSTimber12 said "when organising events of this magnitude surplus items do often present a challenge in how best to use them, or who to give them to. On sighting the surplus satchels, Steve saw an opportunity to put them to good use and arranged to transport them Laos. The children were very excited and grateful, as can be seen by the pride with which they show off their new satchels"

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[Continued next page - more info AUSTimber, Seng Dao SSS Proejct and media contact.]

More information about AUSTimber

AUSTimber08 was an international event staged in Mount Gambier, attracting 8000 visitors from Europe, Americas, Asia, New Zealand and Australia. The official Austimber08 satchels were sponsored for the main conference by Victorian Plantations Corporation and whilst the successful conference was attended to capacity there were surplus satchels.

One of the major changes in 2012 from 2008 will be the co-location of all exposition activities on a single site, rather than in dual locations as with last year. A site has already been earmarked for the 2012 event, 5km west of the Mount Gambier airport. The site will showcase the broad scope of the forestry industry, as it is surrounded on one side by Foresty SA pine plantations and on another by Elders Forestry bluegum plantations, both of which will be due for harvest in 2012.

More information about Seng Dao SSS (Small Simple Satisfaction)

Seng Dao SSS(Small Simple Satisfaction) Project is a one-to-one NGO. It is not registered and does not have national committees or administrative overheads in Australia or Lao PDR. Seng Dao SSS Project has been operating successfully in Ban Kok Ngiew village for over 2 years. In November 2009 the project will expand to the next village of Ban Xieng Lom to assist with refurbishing the village High School. This High School is one of the oldest and most important High Schools in Luang Prabang Province, serving many small, remote villages and hamlets along the Nam Khan River.

Seng Dao SSS Project is planning to support two young men from these two villages to study Forestry at University. One young man will study in Luang Prabang and the other will study in Vientiane.

Ban Kok Gniew village is one of many poor villages in Laos. At the same time, the village is well-known as a teak growing village; of the 143 families in the village, 60% have small blocks of teak. The village always has been a place where many Australian and European foresters and forestry students have come to collecting data and get field experience. In the last two years the village has become the focus for small, teak-related projects supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) and the Japan/Swedish FSIP.

If any one would like to help Seng Dao SSS Project or support these two young men in any way please contact

Seng Dao Midgley
35, Steinwedel St
Farrer. ACT. 2607

Email: dao.midgley@salwood.com

Media Contact:

Anne Hinkly-Tyler | Marketing Manager | AUSTimber 2012
Marketing@austimber2012.com.au