



Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge Fun Run

Celebrating Australia's 60 years of diplomatic relations with Laos and Thailand

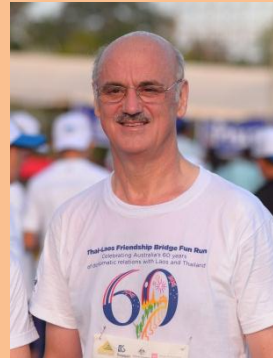
On 18 November 2012, over 3000 people from Australia, Thailand, Laos, and around the world participated in a 5 km fun run across the first Thai – Laos Friendship Bridge in celebration of the 60th anniversaries of Australia's diplomatic relations with Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic this year. The event was organised by the Australian Embassies in Bangkok and Vientiane in cooperation with the Nong Khai Provincial Office, Nong Khai Running Club and Vientiane Capital. The Thai – Laos Friendship Bridge, the first major bridge across the lower Mekong, was constructed with funding from the Australian Government. Opened in 1994, the bridge links the town of Nong Khai in Thailand with the capital of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vientiane.



A symbol of the strong relationship between Australia, Thailand and Laos.

"The first Thai – Laos Friendship plays an important role in regional connectivity and development. Thailand has received substantial benefit from this bridge as seen from the value of trade of around 50 billion baht annually,"

- Nong Khai Governor Wirat Limsuwat



"The first Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge has transformed communications between Thailand and Laos. In 1993, the year before the bridge opened, total trade through Nong Khai Customs House totalled Bt3.6 billion. Last year, total trade over the bridge was Bt43 billion. In 1994, 27,000 vehicles crossed the bridge. Last year, 845,000 vehicles made the crossing. The number of people who crossed the bridge since it was opened has increased from a little over 100,000 to well over five million. Today, I think we might see a new record for the number of people to cross the bridge in a single day," - **Australian Ambassador to Thailand James Wise**



"Today we are demonstrating the friendship that the Lao, Thai and Australian people share. What could be more fitting than to celebrate our friendship by running over the first Friendship Bridge, a bridge that Australia built, a bridge that has brought two of Australia's closest friends – Laos and Thailand – closer together,"
Australian Ambassador to the Lao PDR Lynda Worthaisong

"Having the people of Laos, Thailand and Australia joining this auspicious occasion reflects the prosperous relationship between our three countries,"

- Mayor of Vientiane Capital Soukan Mahalath



Australian didgeridoo player David Williams playing alongside traditional Thai bong lang.



Australian Embassy Bangkok team



Mr Soukan Mahalath, Mayor of Vientiane (right)



Nong Khai Governor Wirat Limsuwat (right)



First to finish, Chartchai Sootsukhon

We would like to express appreciation to our valued partners, sponsors and all participants for this successful event

