

Member	Will Fowles	Electorate	Burwood/Ringwood
Period	1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$12,802.65
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$0.00

Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$6,627.53
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$0.00
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	n/a

Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
28-Oct-25	30-Oct-25	Parliamentary Sitings	\$423.92	Melbourne	\$326.70
18-Nov-25	20-Nov-25	Parliamentary Sitings	\$711.28	Melbourne	\$676.88
02-Dec-25	03-Dec-25	Parliamentary Sitings	\$406.67	Melbourne	\$345.00

Total number of nights for travel allowance claims 5

Total amount paid to member for travel allowance \$1,541.87

60cent underpayment, retified in quarter 4

Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport
12-Dec-25	12-Dec-25	Travel related to trip to Tasmania constituent meeting for Electorate Business	\$86.48	Rideshare	\$86.48
12-Dec-25	12-Dec-25	Return flights to Tasmania for Electorate Business constituent meeting	\$381.75	Flights	\$381.75
12-Dec-25	12-Dec-25	Parking at Melbourne Airport for constituent meeting Electorate Business	\$84.00	Airport Parking	\$84.00

Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims 0

Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance \$552.23

Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid
24-Nov-25	02-Dec-25	Flights to Bangkok to strengthen cultural understanding of the Karen people on the Thai/Burma border as Electorate business	\$1,346.31
24-Nov-25	02-Dec-25	Electorate Business - Study Tour on humanitarian, cultural and cross-border challenges faced by displaced communities in Thailand.	\$3,898.70

Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims 8

Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance \$5,245.01

International Travel Report

Thailand

Study Tour on humanitarian, cultural, and cross-border
challenges faced by displaced Karen communities in
Thailand

24 November – 02 December 2025

Electorate Business

Will Fowles

Reason for travel

To visit Karen community organisations and education providers on the Thai–Burma border, including refugee camps, learning centres, and health facilities, to gain insight into their operations and understand the humanitarian, cultural, and cross-border challenges faced by displaced Karen and other Myanmar refugee communities. The purpose is to assess how community-led development projects may inform advocacy, policy understanding, and multicultural engagement in Victoria, including for Myanmar refugees living in the electorate of Ringwood.

Dates and locations on which business was conducted (travel diary)

Dates and Locations on Which Business Was Conducted (Travel Diary)

Monday 24 Nov

- Departed Melbourne for Bangkok
- Bangkok to Mae Sot

Tuesday 25 Nov

- Meeting with Kanchana Thornton, Director Burma Children's Medical Fund (BCMF)
- Meeting with Phil Thornton, Australian Journalist and Dr Blade, doctor at BCMF
- View Scam centres at Shwe Ko Ko from Thai side of river

Wednesday 26 Nov

- Meeting with Pastor Robert Htway, Director, Karen Refugee Committee
- Meeting with Saw Stephen, Standing Committee Member, Karen National Union
- Meeting with Arthorn Srikeratikarn, Thailand Program Director, The Border Consortium
- Meeting with Dr Nay Hser, Director, Burma Vision

Thursday 27 Nov

- Visit Mae La Refugee Camp
- Meeting with leadership team of Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Convention, Principal of Kawthoolei Karen Baptist School and Bible College and Camp Leader
- Visit to Shalom Arts Leadership College, Mae La Refugee Camp. Meeting with Principal, Dr William
- Dinner at Thoo Mweh Khee Learning Centre (TMK)

Friday 28 Nov

- Special guests at Thoo Mweh Khee Learning Centre (TMK) Assembly
- Tour of TMK
- Meeting with principals and teachers of TMK partner schools from Karen State
- Visit Internally Displaced Peoples and refugees
- Dinner at TMK to meet with TMK and Sharing Hope leadership teams

Saturday 29 Nov

- Attending wedding of teacher at TMK
- Visit Hill Light Theological College
- Visit Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary
- Dinner with Roy Medley, Director, Burma Advocacy Group, USA

Sunday 30 Nov

- Travel Mae Sot - Bangkok
- Debrief

Monday 01 Dec

- Meeting with Charles Prestidge-King, Counsellor (Political), Australian Embassy Thailand
- Meeting with Iwona Spytkowski, Head of Office, UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Thailand
- Depart Bangkok

Tuesday 02 Dec

- Arrive Melbourne

The town, city or suburb in which the accommodation was located; and the value of the accommodation (if claiming the cost of accommodation)

Bangkok (1 night) and Mae Sot (6 nights): \$1500

The mode and value of commercial transport (if claiming the cost of commercial transport)

International Flights: \$1453.20

Domestic Flights: \$500

Internal Transport: \$295.80

Member's objectives

- To gain a deeper understanding of the humanitarian, educational, cultural and cross-border challenges facing displaced Karen communities living along the Thai-Burma border.
- To examine community-led development models, including education, welfare, health, leadership training and civil-society governance, and assess how these approaches may inform Victorian policy, multicultural engagement and community support programs.
- To strengthen relationships with refugee leaders, education providers, humanitarian organisations and international partners to support ongoing advocacy efforts for displaced communities in Victoria and globally.
- To gather insights relevant to Victoria's Myanmar diasporas, including settlement pressures, trauma impacts, youth engagement, and transnational community ties.
- To develop recommendations for future parliamentary advocacy, humanitarian engagement and partnership opportunities between Victorian organisations and border-based NGOs.

Parliaments and Organisations Visited

See Travel Diary for full list

The Border Consortium



Kawthoolei Karen Baptist School and Bible College



Thoo Mweh Khee Learning Centre (TMK) Assembly



Shalom Arts and Leadership College



Sharing Hope delegation



Above photos courtesy of Geoff Maddock

UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Thailand



Australian Embassy Thailand



Persons met in relation to the reason for the travel and the assistance or information obtained from such persons

- Simon Moran (AusCham) – Guidance on business investment environment; insight into grant-making process for Sharing Hope.
- Phil Thornton (Journalist) – Information on Burmese junta's criminal activity; suggested review of US Congressional Research Service reports on money laundering.
- Dr Blade – Advice on medicine distribution inside Burma; coordination with individual pharmacies.
- Pastor Robert Htway – Insights on acute resource challenges post-USAID cuts; EU support for education; NGO program reductions.
- Saw Stephen, KSU / Karen State Spokesperson – Information on opposition to sham elections; advice on political considerations for Australian Government.
- Arthorn Srikeeratikarn (The Border Consortium) – Data on refugee populations, monthly food budgets, and NGO coordination; training for self-made building materials.
- Dr Nay Hser (Eye Surgeon) – Details on surgical support for refugees; approx. 1000 surgeries/year.
- Mae La refugee camp leadership – Information on refugee application process and UNHCR registration issues; camp population and resource shortages.
- Principal William (Shalom Arts School) – Cultural exchange; engagement with students and shared stories.

Reference to documents or publications obtained or considered to be of interest in a Parliamentary sense

None formally documented; insights derived from meetings and site visits.

Summaries of the study areas pursued in the countries visited

Summary of the Study Areas Pursued

- Refugee and Migrant Education Systems
- Community Leadership Development
- Humanitarian and community development models
- Health Care Challenges, including supply chain development for prostheses
- Political, Security and Cross-Border Dynamics
- Cultural Understanding and Community Identity

Summary of the results achieved and any recommendations arising

- Enhanced understanding of the complex humanitarian ecosystem supporting more than 90,000 refugees and tens of thousands of migrant students along the Thai–Burma border.
- Established productive relationships with key civil-society leaders, including education directors, humanitarian coordinators, and refugee camp officials.
- Identified opportunities for Victorian engagement, particularly for diaspora support programs, trauma-informed community services, fundraising collaborations, and educational partnerships.
- Gathered detailed insights into the operational challenges faced by NGOs, including the Trump Administration-induced international funding crisis, food ration reductions, teacher shortages, and political pressure on border communities.
- Obtained credible information on junta-linked criminal activity and the presence of scam centres at Shwe Ko Ko, relevant to policy discussions and national security considerations in Australia.

Author's Note

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the organisations and individuals who made this study tour possible. In particular, I acknowledge the extraordinary work of Sharing Hope, whose long-standing partnerships on the Thai–Burma border opened doors to refugee camps, migrant learning centres and community leaders.

I am deeply grateful to the teachers, principals, humanitarian workers, civil-society leaders, and faith-based organisations who generously shared their experiences. Their commitment to education, dignity, and community-led development in the face of immense hardship is profoundly inspiring.

I also thank the Parliament and the people of Victoria for supporting opportunities to better understand the lived realities of our multicultural communities, including those with strong ties to regions affected by conflict. The insights gathered on this trip will directly inform my ongoing advocacy for displaced communities, for humanitarian engagement, and for strengthened support for Victoria's Myanmar population.

I remain available to brief colleagues, community organisations or stakeholders on the findings of this study tour and the opportunities it presents for deeper Victorian engagement.