

the **Bilum** *MercyWorks*

DECEMBER 2022



INCLUDES 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

EACH VOICE COUNTS

Empower. Educate. Advocate



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

OUR VISION

Mercy in action, partnering with the most vulnerable toward opportunity, dignity, and self-reliance.

OUR MISSION

We are a community development organisation, in the tradition of Catherine McAuley. We work in partnership with local community organisations to support the most vulnerable, both in Australia and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, with a particular focus on women and children. Our programs strive to build capacity and self-reliance and to foster environmental sustainability. Our mission is inspired by Catherine McAuley's vision of change for the poor and disadvantaged.

OUR VALUES

Mutuality • Integrity
Compassion • Justice

MERCY WORKS

PO Box 2023,
North Parramatta NSW 1750
Phone +61 (0) 2 9564 1911
Fax +61 (0) 2 9550 9683

Email mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au
Website www.mercyworks.org.au
ABN 37 147 042 466

Editor Jo Casamento
Design Carter & Co. Creative



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MEMBER

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THE BILUM

In Papua New Guinea, bilums are beautiful, traditional, and intricately handwoven string bags which have been crafted and used by people for hundreds of years to carry their most precious and essential belongings. They are at the heart of Papua New Guinean traditions and hold deep cultural and emotional significance.

The Bilum is the name of The Mercy Works magazine, which carries and communicates the stories of the people involved in the many projects supported by Mercy Works. It is sent to friends, donors and partners of Mercy Works and published in December every year. The Mini Bilum is published online three times a year. In this edition of *The Bilum* our focus is on Each Voice Counts - as we aim to empower the everyday lives of the communities of the projects we work with, to grow into their own potential and contribute towards leading and advocating for better outcomes within their communities.

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In the spirit of reconciliation Mercy Works acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we walk, live and work. We pay tribute to all of those who have nurtured this country over many thousands of years, deriving spiritual and physical needs from the seas, forests, soil, rivers, lakes and streams, and to Elders past and present. We join our First Nations people in honouring these lands as sacred. We welcome the Uluru Statement from the Heart and support an Indigenous voice to parliament, enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

Dear Friends...



When I was a child I usually felt that Mum and Dad listened well to all my stories, both sad and happy. They were very patient in hearing my opinions and questions. However, I vividly remember one occasion before my old aunt visited us when Mum instructed me “that children should be seen and not heard”! I did not like that idea as I was a chatterer and I enjoyed joining in with the adult conversations. Perhaps Mum was worried about what I may come out with if I was given too much airplay!

As we look back over our lives all of us will probably be able to identify times either in our living or working situations when we have not felt free to speak up. Times when our truth was not valued. Times when we may have feared harsh judgement if we spoke our truth and gave our honest viewpoint. Times when we have been hindered by fear rather than responding with courage to situations of injustice.

Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy gave so much wise advice. One of my favourite sayings of Catherine's is -

“Speak as your mind directs and always act with courage”.

Catherine urges us to speak up with courage. In a book I have been reading lately, the author speaks of exercising our ‘courage muscle’. With practice this ‘courage muscle’ gets stronger.

The theme of this year's Bilum, ‘Each Voice Counts’, holds a lot of significance for me and for all who are part of **Mercy Works**. It was the theme for our lively **Friends Gathering** in October when we heard firsthand from many people who directly benefit from our **Mercy Works** projects across Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste. These voices can so often be ignored. As people of mercy, it's no longer good enough to sit passively on the side. We must first of all listen before we respond. These courageous voices from the ground both inspire and challenge us.

Both the stories of our projects in the Philippines are shocking yet hope-filled. The **Cherilyn Finds Her Voice** story gives powerful testament to the healing and inspiration that can have a ripple effect for other survivors who have also been caught in the dark cycle of human trafficking. The women in our *Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy Project* in Cebu in the Philippines are moving from being victims to becoming confident, out-spoken advocates. Alisha's story of **Making Dreams Come True** is also very painful and

disturbing, yet evidence of her resilience and the impact of living in a holistic, healing environment such as *Balay Banaag Residential Centre* in Davao city, in the Philippines.

The incredible impact of our *Mercy Connect* program which provides volunteer mentoring for refugees and asylum seekers is highlighted in the voices of Marilyn, Salima and Arezou in the **Will You Be My Grandma** story.

The three stories of our projects walking alongside Aboriginal communities capture the wise voices of our First Nations people. **Janaya's Journey** is a wonderful example of the influence of the Elder women on Janaya and the *Baabayn* community. The rich culture inherent in connecting young people with country and community is portrayed in the hopes for the **Learning on Country** project in Adelaide. The Aboriginal students from the *Cape York Girl Academy* near Cairns are delighted with the multi-sensory calm room which is being built with support from **Mercy Works**. This will support their future as they are **Learning to Fly in Cape York**.

I suspect you will be intrigued to read the **Mercy Money and People Power** and **Mercy Mushrooms** stories about our community development work in *Simbu* in Papua New Guinea. The voices from the ground give witness to the life-changing impacts of these projects.

In this edition I hope you will also be inspired and challenged by the stories and the powerful voices within them. Voices that are given airplay. Voices that are given respect and compassion. Voices that call to us from the edge to respond with mercy and justice. I hope that you too ensure that in your world, wherever you are, every voice is heard. I'm sure you will agree with us at **Mercy Works** - each voice counts!

And so, I conclude by thanking all those who make up the dedicated team at **Mercy Works** - our very committed staff in both Australia and Papua New Guinea, the *Mercy Congregation Leaders* who are the Members, Board Directors and Standing Committee members, and all who have given us faithful support during this year. I especially thank our new Board Chair Joe Zabar, for joining **Mercy Works** with a generous, Mercy heart. Joe brings extensive experience to **Mercy Works**, and I am most grateful for all his support and inspiring vision for the future.

Enjoy reading ... and remember to make sure you listen to the voices from those at the edge in your world.

Sally Bradley RSM
Executive Director

Let's Catch Up!

We were delighted to be able to catch up with our community of supporters, donors, schools, Sisters, volunteers and project participants at our **Annual Friends Gathering – Each Voice Counts** – which we held this year in person – live for the first time in two years – and online in a Zoom webinar.

The results were outstanding and the buzz in the room was quite magical. Our two special international guests, **Sr Maryanne Kolkia RSM** and **Steven Dude** flew in from Papua New Guinea for the occasion, sharing with us their exciting latest developments in Simbu and Kiunga and reconnecting with Sisters who have worked alongside them in Papua New Guinea.

Elders **Aunty Jenny Ebsworth** and **Aunty Cass**, as well as our Empowered Educator, **Janaya Hickey**, from Our *Baabayn* project performed a traditional Indigenous water ceremony with those gathered in the magnificent grounds of the convent gardens in Parramatta.

And some very special guests from our Adult Literacy Classes at Hilltop Road, **Salima** and **Arezou**, stole the hearts of the room with their stories of how learning English through our *Mercy Connect* Adult Literacy Program has turned their lives around (read more Page 9).

Special thank you to the technical team for helping put it all together as well as the delicious catering from House of Welcome – a social enterprise offering delicious food made lovingly by refugees and people seeking asylum as well as those seeking pathways to employment.

You can download the highlights here:

<https://www.mercyworks.org.au/highlights-from-our-annual-friends-gathering-each-voice-counts/>



 #Showtime Steven Dude and (L-R) Aunty Jenny Ebsworth, Sr Sally Bradley and Sr Maryanne Kolkia spoke at our Annual Friends Gathering



 #FamilyTies Aunty Cass, Janaya, Aunty Jenny Ebsworth and Jo Casamento at Annual Friends Gathering

Mercy on the Move

Our new Overseas Projects Manager **Maria Prescilla**, who joined us in March, has been busy visiting our projects. In October she visited the Philippines, where she took part in advocacy work for our *Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy* in Cebu city and visited the *Balay Banaag* Residential Centre for young girls in Davao city. In November, she visited our *Chicken and Egg Nutrition* project in the mountains in Maucatar, Timor-Leste, as well as the *Katilosa Centre for the Disabled* in Bacau.

"It's been a very enriching experience visiting the projects in person and seeing the impact of the work we are doing," says Maria. *"Monitoring in the field helps you understand the project from the participant's perspective rather than just the partners."*

Meanwhile, closer to home, **Sr Sally Bradley RSM** and **Clare Bennett** (Program Manager – Refugees and Indigenous) visited three of our First Nations Projects in Adelaide, including *Nunga Babies Watch* and *Yartangka Tirkanthi*. Sr Sally also made a trip to Cairns last month to visit the newly built forward-thinking, multi-sensory calm-room at the *Cape York Girl Academy* (See story page 12).

Breaking Boundaries

In September, Mercy International Association published their report: *Breaking Boundaries: A Mercy Response to People on the Move* with research and information from dozens of Mercy organisations around the globe, including **Mercy Works**. We are very proud to say the report featured our *Mercy Connect* program for Asylum Seekers and Refugees heavily throughout, including a special page dedicated to **Rodiayh**, a former *Mercy Connect* Bankstown High student, and her volunteer mentor, **Christine**, to encapsulate the "significance of friendships and human connections" and illustrate "that relationships of mutuality and reciprocity are common across the Mercy World". The report echoes our sentiment here at **Mercy Works**, that "we need to listen deeply to the voices of everyone if we are to move forward with courage and hope".



 #AdelaideAdventure Julie Toyama, Cate Meftam and Aunty Pat from the Nunga Babies Watch Team meet Clare Bennett & Sr Sally in Port Adelaide in October.



 #AllSmiles #Reunion Steven, Maryanne, Sr Anne Foale RSM at Friends Gathering



 #ReadySetZoom Countdown to our Live 'Each Voice Counts' Webinar! (L-R) Jo, Aunty Jenny, Sr Sally, Sr Maryanne and Steven



 #FantasticFundraising Sr Sally receives an incredible donation from Principal Danuta Maka at our highest raising Primary School, St Michaels at Baulkham Hills. Congrats!

Podiums, Politics and Parramatta

Mercy Works was thrilled to be just one of the many amazing community group recipients of the City of Parramatta Community Capacity Building Grant program which supported our *Mercy Connect* program, among other grants received this year.

Sr Sally and our Grants Coordinator **Katrina**

Richardson attended the



#ParramattaPolitics a "good cup of tea" with @drandrewcharlton - the Federal Member for Parramatta - to chat all things development (L-R) Maria Prescilla, Sr Maryanne Kolkia, Paul Taylor, Andrew Charlton, Martin Binoj, Steven Dude, Sr Sally Bradley

event where they were presented with a certificate by the City of Parramatta Lord Mayor, **Cr Donna Davis**. Katrina also accepted a Highly Commended at the 2022 NSW Clubs and Community Awards night. *Mercy Connect*, supported by Dooleys Catholic Club, was a state finalist in the Education Category.

We were also pleased to welcome Parramatta MP **Dr Andrew Charlton** to the **Mercy Works** offices to chat about all things development with our team.



#AwardTime Grants Coordinator Katrina Richardson & Emma from Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club with their Mercy Connect award

Lights, Camera, Mercy In Action!

With lockdowns behind us, our Executive Director, **Sr Sally**, and Communications and Fundraising Coordinator, **Jo Casamento** set out to reconnect with Mercy schools Australia-wide, starting with a visit to the impressive St Joseph's College, Mildura, in March.

Throughout 2022 we also visited: Catherine McAuley College, Bendigo; Mt Lilydale Mercy College; Emmanuel College, Warrnambool; Mercy Catholic College, Chatswood; St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween; St Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills; St Pat's Cathedral College for the Senior Students Forum in Parramatta; Guardian Angels CPS, Ashmore; Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg; Sacred Heart College, Kyneton; Saint Aloysius, North Melbourne; The Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy;



#MilduraMeeting Sally and Jo presenting to Year 7 at St Joseph's College Mildura in March



#ChocolateChomping Santa Maria College, Perth, who raised an outstanding \$15,000 this year for Mercy Works, finds a sweet tooth for Mercy fundraising

St Raphael's Primary School, Parkside; St Aloysius College, Adelaide; Merici College, Braddon; St Monica's College in Cairns, St Michael's Primary School in Gordonvale; Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School in Earlville, Mother of Good Counsel Primary School in North Cairns, the Mercy Ministry Companions Conference and Santa Maria College in Attadale – which our Perth MC Coordinator **Kristen** visited.

We also engaged with schools unable to be visited in person with tailored zoom presentations held for: Seeds of Justice; 19 Principals Forum and St Brigid's Lesmurdie Leadership Team. **Let us know if you would like a visit!**



#MercyDayMadness CMC Bendigo gets colourfully creative for Mercy Day, raising an amazing \$17,495!

The 'M' Factor

Our very generous schools displayed 'Mercy In Action' with zest for their annual Mercy Day Fundraising. From Mercy Idol, to art days, cake stalls, chocolate guessing competitions and dress ups, schools across Australia dug deeply for **Mercy Works** and the results have been outstanding. A total of **\$240,546.50** was raised from this year's activities alone in our schools. We are all part of the one Mercy Family!

An Afghan Feast

Earlier this year, the incredible duo of **Sr Mary Lewis RSM** and **Tat Singa**, from our ground-breaking *Mercy Connect* Melbourne Program were able to host a special Afghan Feast for Eid Day at the Dandenong Library's Adult Literacy Classes.

"It was the first lesson after Eid – the Muslim Feast at the conclusion of Ramadan,"

explains Sr Mary of the religious holiday,

Eid al-Fitr, which is celebrated by Muslims worldwide because it marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan.

"The previous Friday, one of the students presented us with a note asking to throw a party. It was decided that everyone could bring something to share, and we could all celebrate. All were happy and agreed."

There were Cambodian donuts, Aussie Anzac Biscuits, Afghan Bread in multiple varieties, Spicy Chicken wings and Biryani, Afghani dumplings, sandwiches, chocolate, cakes and chips to name a few. *"Not much was left over! A happy time was had by all!"*



#AfghanFeast Eid Day at Dandenong Library Adult Literacy Classes!

Cherilyn Finds Her Voice

PROJECT: Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy
LOCATION: Cebu City, The Philippines **PARTNER:** Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters
PARTICIPANTS: 786 **GOAL:** To raise the level of society's response to human trafficking

**WARNING* This story is of an extremely sensitive nature and may be triggering to some readers who have experienced abuse.*

Cherilyn has finally found her voice. Now an USWAG officer (United Services of Women's Advocates of the Good Shepherd) whom Mercy Works supports through *The Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy Project* in Cebu in the Philippines, she spends her days advocating for women who are survivors of human trafficking and making sure their voices are also heard.

But this wasn't always the case. At one time Cherilyn admits she was in the dark, completely voiceless, and unable to change the direction of her life, trapped in a world of prostitution, drugs and traumatic experiences.

Cherilyn's story begins in the red-light district of Cebu City where, as a teenager, she was led into prostitution after being raped by her cousin. She also witnessed the brutal murder of her father, who was shot in front of her in the family home.

Drugs and prostitution were normal in her upbringing, and the troubled 15-year-old found herself in a lot of debt to those who forced her to work for survival.

"We owed a lot of money to our managers – and we couldn't say 'I want to leave' or 'I want to stop working' because every day they take out the money that we owe," she says of the poverty and trauma she was surrounded by.

"I was in the situation because I didn't have money, and I couldn't go back to the house where every room reminded me of the traumas I had been through."

It was the outreach program conducted by the Good Shepherd Sisters that saved her at the age of 17 from a life of human slavery.

"They would come to our place of work every night [in the red-light district] and give us inspirational talks. It was the start of me thinking my life could change and that I could start on my recovery."

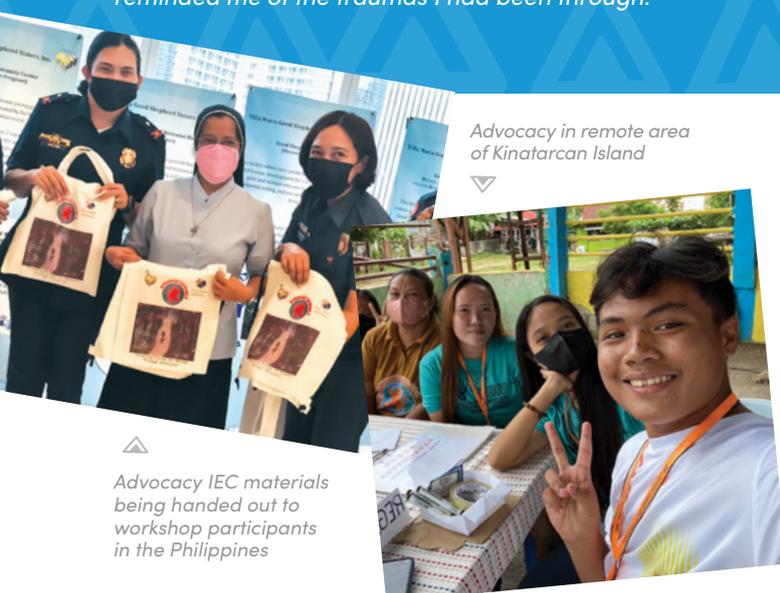
The Good Shepherd program is not just about healing, but also educational help and pathways to other employment. It includes advocacy and empowerment through lobbying the government and a coalition of like-minded entities.

"It was a long process to start healing. I went to a rehabilitation program at the recovery centre where we went deep within the traumas and learned to recognise those traumas and then we are able to take the chance to heal those traumas. It takes time to accept those traumas, not just the time but the emotional damage the traumas have cost us."

After 10 years volunteering at the recovery centre, she then began her life in Cebu as an independent woman.

"Even now I am healed, there are still the scars from those traumas, and I cannot hide them."

It was after a gathering for the *Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy Project* this year, that Cherilyn had



Advocacy in remote area of Kinatarcan Island

Advocacy IEC materials being handed out to workshop participants in the Philippines

CREATING CHANGE IN CEBU

Human trafficking is a social issue that needs social action. Through the *Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy Project*, Mercy Works hopes to provide awareness and education; to capacitate people in becoming strong advocates against human trafficking and to form a coalition of like-minded organisations to create change.

Ultimately, we hope it will create a desire to advocate for the protection of human rights for all people, especially



◀ Artwork created by survivors of human trafficking

Survivors: Cherilyn (centre) and her fellow USWAG officers meet in Cebu in September

the strength to reach out and become an USWAG officer, volunteering a few days a week and working with other women who are survivors.

"It was the start of a new journey for me to reach out and touch the hearts of other girls."

While Cherilyn admits she has come far, the pain is deeply embedded. By giving other women a voice, she says her new role is helping her heal.

"What gives me strength is that I can also see these traumas in the other girls. And seeing them change is also healing me, so that's why I really want to continue and touch the lives of others through my experiences."

The main dream of this project is to raise society's response to human trafficking. And Cherilyn is convinced education is key to the process. Not just for girls and women, who need to know their human rights, but also to raise the level of society's response to human trafficking.

The group meets once a month at an Advocacy Hub to plan activities and workshops and are empowered to advocate in set communities based on geographic locations. The creation of this community of survivors will make this project sustainable into the future.

Now stable and working as a call centre agent in accounting software, Cherilyn says just by her presence there, other women can see how somebody already survived from the same situation – and with the right support they can turn their life around.

"Being an inspiration for them is the only thing I can do for them right now," she says quietly.

"When I was in that situation somebody also did something for me, she was my voice when I was voiceless," she recalls, referring to Mely Lenario, a Project Coordinator at Good Shepherd Welcome House.

"So right now, that I have my own voice to say, 'I have survived' and showing those who are voiceless now, 'I was voiceless like you' – that 'I was in that situation, but right now I am proud' – that I have my own voice to say, 'I have survived'. As a person who was in the dark before – we really need inspiration to say 'I can be the same as her. I can also do the same as her. I can also survive like her'.

"I can also say; 'because of you I have survived. Because of you I was helped and now I am able to help others."

You can watch Cherilyn's Interview here: <https://youtu.be/bxibLh7X3cM>

women and young girls, and challenge the current systems that fuel human trafficking and all forms of sexual exploitation and prostitution – the antithesis to human rights and human dignity.

The first year of the project has produced the published report: *Delving into the Drivers for Human Trafficking of Women: The Cebu Province Experience*, based on interviews with 100 women. It found the major drivers included lack of opportunity to get proper education due to poverty and abuse in their early years of life, the absence of birth certificates (which leaves them no official identity), inadequate housing due to their inability

to acquire property, the inaccessibility to high-paying jobs, and compromising healthcare.

"These drivers place women in vulnerable circumstances, and they become easy prey to human traffickers," says head researcher Marietta Latonia, RSW, MSSW.

"As different groups persevere in networking and responding, then, every girl, woman and person trapped in the web of abuse and violation will break free and eventually travel the road to healing and restoration of their dignity and become important contributors to the transformation of society and our world."

Making Dreams Come True

PROJECT: Balay Banaag Residential Centre
LOCATION: Davao City, The Philippines
PARTNER: Australian Marist Solidarity
PARTICIPANTS: 15 girls **GOAL:** To create a positive supporting experience for the children of prostituted women through education, rehabilitation and healing

WARNING This story is of an extremely sensitive nature and may be triggering to some readers who have experienced abuse.

Alisha's* story is almost too painful to share. It is extremely confronting, yet in the end it is a hope-filled, inspirational story!

Alisha was only four years old when she was hit with a glass bottle of Cola to her head, hit with a piece of wood on various parts of her body and clearly remembers an instance where her mother tried to kill her. She recalls her mother, a prostitute, would use her and her brother to throw in front of cars so she could accept money in exchange and buy shabu (methamphetamine) to feed her drug habit.

Alisha also recalls she was tied with a belt around her head whenever her mother would get angry and was sexually abused by her mother's customers. "She was touched by men in her head, arms and in her private parts," says a report from the time. "She was confused why her mother did this to her when she did not do anything wrong."

Fortunately, she was referred to *Balay Banaag*, a residential centre, run by the Marist Sisters since 2018 and supported by **Mercy Works**. They provide an alternative family environment for 15 vulnerable girls, as well as play therapy, psycho-social activities and teach basic life-skills.

All of these girls are daughters of prostitutes. Many do not know their father, and most have experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The centre also provides parenting skills for mothers and guardians with a hope for re-integration and ultimately hopes to break the cycle of prostitution in their respective families.

When Alisha arrived at *Balay Banaag*, she was painfully shy. "She was silent and aloof with other people, when she got comfortable she got along with other children, but she was easily irritated. She had tantrums, she threw and scattered things."

In school classes, however, Alisha behaved. "She respects her teacher and wants to have good grades, but her tantrums lead to absences," says a report from the time.

While Alisha is gradually recovering from the trauma of the physical abuse by her mother, the memories remain. She can still recall those experiences, but she understands her mother's drug addictions and why her mother did this to her "which she really hates".



▲
Alisha* (second from left) with her friends at the Centre in the Kitchen Garden

◀ Alisha is now living back with her Grandma & sister Melinda

"Last year her mother sent her a gift and it was the first time that she actually received it and even wore the pyjamas her mother sent her," says one of the Sisters. "This indicated she is slowly accepting her trauma with the mother."

What is truly remarkable about this story – is that despite everything, Alisha has always spoken of making her dreams come true.

Her older sister, Melinda*, who also lived at *Balay Banaag*, ultimately served as her inspiration to continue with her education. "She wanted to finish her studies and become a doctor someday. She took inspiration from her sister, who now studies Computer Engineering at University as well as running a small online business that helps provide for her education."

After spending last Christmas with her sister and her five siblings, Melinda expressed she wanted her family to be reunited and to turn Alisha's dreams into a reality, and that she would now be able to take care of Alisha and send her to school.

After multiple case conferences with Melinda and her grandmother and visits to the home to check for her safety and the readiness of the family to ensure her education continues, Alisha has finally been re-integrated into the family after six years.

"She is grateful to the *Balay Banaag* Centre for all the support and the opportunity for healing and for making her believe that she can overcome the difficulties in her life."

The two sisters continue to believe that they can reach their dreams someday. Alisha is also now enrolled in Grade 6 in the local Elementary School.

"Alisha has promised that someday she will visit the Centre to share her stories and to become an inspiration to other scholars," says one of the Sisters proudly. "She can also support them when she reaches her goal to become a doctor."

Names* have been changed to protect identities.

Will You Be My Grandma?

THE POWER OF CONNECTION

PROJECT: Mercy Connect **LOCATION:** Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Ballarat
PARTICIPANTS: 95 schools | 171 volunteer mentors | 1,007 refugee and asylum seeker students and adults **GOAL:** To recruit, train and support volunteers to assist students, adults and their families from refugee backgrounds to adjust to life in Australia

For Marilyn Lucas-Smith, becoming a volunteer mentor with Mercy Connect has given meaning to her retirement.

"When I retired, I felt my retirement had very little meaning. So I was looking for something to do that would give a little bit of purpose to my life. And this has certainly filled that for me," Marilyn, a retired school teacher, explained at our recent Annual Friends Gathering in October.

Initially starting as a mentor to a kindergarten classroom at Sacred Heart in Mt Druitt, Marilyn helped seven refugee students who knew very little English keep up with their schoolwork.

"When I started there was one little girl in particular, a very sweet little girl born in a refugee camp – whose mum had no assistance from a midwife or doctor – and this little girl was born with an ill-formed arm, so she only had the use of one arm.

"So not only did she have a language disability but a physical one as well. She was such a sweet little girl and very willing to be helped, and one day she said to me: 'Mrs Lucas-Smith, can you be my grandma?'"

"I said 'Well you have a grandma'. And she said 'Well, yes, but she lives in Iraq'.

"So I said, 'I'll be your grandma at school, is that ok?'. 'Oh yes' she said, 'I'd like that.' So that's something she gave to me that I cherish."

Marilyn has since moved to help mentor the adult literacy learners at our Hilltop Road Community Centre in Sydney, run by Catherine Gregory, The Community Liaison Officer at Hilltop Road Public School, where Mercy Connect provides volunteers to support students. She says the Adult Literacy Classes empower parents.

"It's a no brainer really," says Catherine. *"The classes are so important because our mums want the best for our children, and we want the best for our mums. So many of our mums will want to be able to support their children at school, but they might not have the language behind it to be able to support them and understand what's happening in the school environment."*

The classes have a ripple effect.

"It also goes back the other way. When the children see their parents at school, and they're engaged and part of the school community – they're really proud. They pop down and say, 'Is mum here today – is she learning today?'"



(L-R) Hilltop Community Liaison Officer Catherine Gregory, Mercy Connect Adult Literacy Learners Salima & Arezou and Mercy Connect volunteer mentor Marilyn Lucas-Smith on stage at our Annual Friends Gathering in October

For mum-of-four, Salima, who attended our Friends Gathering in October with her gorgeous children and spoke beautifully in public on a microphone for the first time ever, the lessons have made her happy. *"After my daughter is starting school, I started English class, I talk to my daughter in school, and I found at the class I am very happy. [After] One year and a half [of lessons] Corona is coming and stopping and I'm feeling good because now I have started again. Before I am not talking but I have some idea and now I'm doing well. Now I am very happy."*

And for Salima's classmate, Arezou, the English classes have given her a new lease of life. She has completed a barista course and a course in floristry. She brought our room to tears when she shared how the classes have given her the ability to help her children in ways we couldn't even imagine.

"I'm so happy I'm here – I want to share some experience with you all," she told the packed room. *"In the beginning I started the English – I don't know anything, but now I'm comfortable."*

"When I come here – I'm in culture shock. I like to learn English. But I can't to enrol. When my daughter started kindergarten it was very difficult for me – because I not understand English. Now my English is good. Especially when my kids are sick, I can't go to the doctor – before [Mercy Connect's classes] I can't explain [how they are sick], but now I am good. I can help them now."

Our Adult Literacy Classes operate in four locations across Australia supporting 52 adult refugees and asylum seekers with 21 volunteer mentors. It would not be able to exist without the generosity of our donors and funders.



Janaya's Journey

PROJECT: Connected Kids – Empowered Educator **LOCATION:** Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Mt Druitt, NSW **PARTNER:** Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
PARTICIPANTS: 13 mums and 20 children **GOAL:** To empower and enhance young Aboriginal mums in the area to participate in a program designed to enhance their parenting and broader life skills, to promote the resilience of young families and reduce the likelihood of intervention by child protection authorities. At the same time empower and educate the early childhood administrator in business administration

Part of the overall ethos at **Mercy Works** is to empower communities to empower themselves. Our work with the women of the *Baabayn Mums and Bubs Group* to grow into their potential and to contribute to an aboriginal led movement for better outcomes for First Nations women and children is testament to this.

Meet Janaya Hickey, the early childhood educator at *Baabayn* – a powerhouse young mum, who's hopes of learning business administrative skills which will empower her community are being supported by **Mercy Works**.

"Baabayn is the centrepiece of Mount Druitt today," says childcare worker Janaya confidently, a mum-to-three children, who is growing into a much larger role at the centre. *"We are the community's voice. Everything that happens in the Mt Druitt area, they come to have a meeting with our directors before they do anything. Or a consultation with the community. Usually our community is quite loud, so they have the input and that's what we provide."*

She says *Baabayn* is a healing centre for Aboriginal women and the Aboriginal community in general.

"A lot of our mums are from the stolen generation or grew up in care not knowing who their parents and families were – and coming to Baabayn as Aboriginal people you can connect. Because somebody in our office will know your

family. Because that's how it works. You can trace the lines! We all come from somewhere. We can link them to where they are from as we know the community. We give them just a little bit of information about their parents, or their grandparents, where and what they did. Or where they are from. We can take them in as our community and heal."

It's this growing confidence and growth mindset which **Mercy Works** is embracing, with Aboriginal self-determination the best antidote to the disadvantage compounded by many generations of trauma. Janaya has seen her role go from child carer for a one-off healing weekend in 2019, when she was first approached by her nan, Aunty Jenny Ebsworth – a respected Aboriginal elder who is one of four directors at *Baabayn* – to now taking on a senior role which is seeing her study for her Cert IV in Business Administration, deal with services, run the Mums and Bubs club and organise massive NAIDOC events.

"We hope to grow our business and change the way we operate with an admin team – that way when people, agencies, and government services approach Baabayn they will see us and then we can point them in the right direction."

Baabayn runs six programs, five days a week – a Healing Circle, Homework Club, Mums and Bubs Club, Pick Up Sis Youth Program for Aboriginal High School Students, and a Creative Open Day in partnership with Blacktown Arts.



◀ Far left: (L-R) Indigenous Project Manager Clare Bennett with our Empowered Educator Janaya Hickey at Baabayn

◀ Bubs Club: Serena and her sister enjoy their weekly sessions

"We have around 150 attendees a week. We are the connection for the community. So even when the community has a problem with another service, they will approach Baabayn to intervene and help the community member feel comfortable to attend that service."

She says many mums suffer with mental illness, PTSD, and trauma from their own upbringing and as they become mums the trauma is still there.

"To stop the cycle we create a comfort space and support the mums through their journey for as long as they need whatever day, we're always available. We really want to keep our bubs together and not lose them to the system and let it repeat itself, as a lot of our mums don't have mums or dads so a lot look at us for guidance – so we help them – we treat them like their babies, and they grow wings and can fly away."

Many of the mums in the group find employment through the program. This year nine of the Baabayn mums were invited to showcase their artworks in an immersive display of art projections at Crown Sydney's inaugural Vivid Sydney activation, The Gallery. And one mum of five, with a background of domestic violence, has turned her life around and is in full time employment.

"A lot of mums have started their own business. They now sell at the markets; they have their own websites. We have a guy come in and show them how to build and run a website – we provide mentors for them and if they have an issue that mentor will guide them into the right step – if not Baabayn will usually pick up the slack. We help them with equipment, like the market stalls and EFTPOS machines, or a printer at home. Now they have businesses growing!"

Originally starting from a circle of eating and talking, Baabayn stands for 'Ancestral Woman' – which comes from the Nambucca Region. "That's what our aunties felt – the name related to them and where they are from. Our directors are four strong Aboriginal women."

It's these women who still inspire Janaya today.

"I've known these women since I was a baby and to see their dream come to life; the family days and the Christmas parties and the excursions when we go away as a community – to actually be a part of it today is amazing. My kids will grow the way I did. And that's what I want. To make sure my kids get the upbringing I had. I was exposed to all of these beautiful women very, very young, and you learn a bit every single day."

"The elders come on Tuesday and stay here all day. We have yarns, consultations, excursions, and they are happy, and that comes with my moral code, my Aboriginal law which is my land, my origin, my respect, and my elders. I love my elders, they're the ones that guide us through life. That's my morals, and that's how I run."



▲ Jesse and Uncle Tim from Kura Yerlo hope Yartangka Tirkanthi will reconnect Aboriginal youth with their country

Yartangka Tirkanthi

LEARNING ON COUNTRY

PROJECT: Yartangka Tirkanthi – Learning on Country **LOCATION:** Port Adelaide, SA **PARTNER:** Kura Yerlo Inc **PARTICIPANTS:** 20 youth **GOAL:** To give young people access to cultural and language learning opportunities from Aboriginal communities outside of metropolitan Adelaide

This new Mercy Works partnership project with Kura Yerlo Inc is giving young Aboriginal people access to cultural and language learning opportunities through visits 'on country'.

Yartangka Tirkanthi – which means 'Learning on Country' – honours the potential of Indigenous youth and workers to grow their knowledge of home country, language, culture and Elders through connection with their land.

This year, **Mercy Works** hopes to connect two youth groups with their communities – one to Raukkan (Ngarrindjeri) and one to Wirraway (Peremangk), through overnight trips. This reconnection will strengthen intergenerational relationships, provide safe spaces for kinship connection, build positive shared memories, and recognise the diversity of local communities.

"The majority of participants are living in difficult circumstances with physical disabilities or psychological distress. They experience frequent grief and loss within their families so these trips will provide a sense of respite as well as the prospect of visiting their home communities for a happy purpose," says Claire Fleckner from Kura Yerlo.

Jesse, the Practical Support Leader at Kura Yerlo told Sr Sally and our Program Manager Clare Bennett in a recent visit in October they are really excited to "empower young people by returning their culture to them."

"A lot of these young people have been displaced from their traditional lands – whether that's historically or very recently – down to Adelaide where it's safer and there are more opportunities. One of the great privileges is reconnecting our young people to culture through cultural excursions and our art programs. We hope this will build a sense of pride in their identity, belonging and resilience and a vehicle for healing."

Learning to Fly in Cape York



▲ Shaquoiah, 3, one of the toddlers who lives and learns with her mum at The Cape York Girl Academy, is learning to spread her wings

The Cape York Girl Academy is a first-of-its-kind boarding school which provides Indigenous teenage girls - who are young mothers, or otherwise at risk from disengaging - the opportunity to complete their education.

At Cape York Girl Academy, teenage mothers and their babies live and learn together, gain life skills, prepare for future employment and improve and maintain their physical, social and emotional well-being. They learn essential parenting skills to care for their own children.

In partnership with *The Cape York Girl Academy*, **Mercy Works** has built a new sensory technology room this term for a culturally appropriate multi-sensory de-escalation reflection room. Students can go to this room to feel transported into a calm and familiar setting that supports emotional self regulation. Here, they can take time to become calm and open to problem solving and healing.

"The multi-sensory room at Cape York Girl Academy has added a space for students to seek support and engage in help-seeking behaviour when they are feeling emotional dysregulation. It encourages students to recognise the change in their bodies and emotions and seek connection," says Principal Mandy Ross.

"During times of emotional dysregulation, students can lose hours of learning time with their teachers; the multi-sensory room can reduce this time to 15 minutes", she added.

Sr Sally Bradley recently visited the Academy and reports with great enthusiasm how cherished the room has become for the students.

"It really is an amazing model of an Indigenous girls boarding school," says Sr Sally.

▶ *Principal Mandy Ross relaxes in the multi-sensory calm-room with the students and her dog Sapho, who is a very loved member of the school community*

PROJECT: Cape York Girl Academy
LOCATION: Wangetti Beach, QLD
PARTNER: Cape York Partnership
PARTICIPANTS: 15 teenage girls and 2 children
GOAL: To grow effective and confident mothers, happy and confident children, and provide young Indigenous women with opportunities for growth and success in every aspect of their lives

In the room are tools to support the students to engage in self-regulation including two emotional regulation pillows, art and craft supplies, coloured dough, pencils, textas, paints, an essential oil diffuser, a small projector with coloured lights to give soft mood lighting and worksheets to share their stories to develop confidence and self-awareness.

"The Junior students (Years 7-9) assembled the furniture for this special room and helped the Social, Emotional and Wellbeing Counsellor, Miss Rebecca, design and decorate the room, which also has large comfortable bean bags to relax in. There are also emotional regulation pillows which assist the students to identify and express their feelings and build trust and a beautifully designed circular coloured mat" says Sr Sally.

"The girls shared with me how calming and special this room is and how much they love to come here."

The girls go home to their family and Indigenous community every school holiday as well as at Christmas and this year **Mercy Works** is proud to share that four students will graduate for Year 12. Congratulations!

▶ *Model mum, model student: Naydia works on her Cert II in Hospitality with her MW supplied iPad*



Mercy Money & People Power:

“MY WHOLE LIFE HAS CHANGED”

PROJECT: Mercy Works Simbu **LOCATION:** Simbu Province, Papua New Guinea **BENEFICIARIES:** 2,254
GOAL: To improve the standard of living of communities in this rugged mountainous area through building community capacity, ownership and empowerment

Life for Maria, aged 70, has always been a day-to-day struggle...

When her husband passed away she was left a widow and head of the household with seven small children. She struggled to care for them alone and was unable to pay school fees to educate her children to tertiary level.

Enter **Mercy Works** and our Simbu Project Coordinator Sr Maryanne Kolkia's Leave No One Behind Savings and Loans Society (LNBSL). The simple concept invites every individual to be part of the development journey and transition from micro-enterprises (like her 30Kina Project) too Small to Medium Business Enterprises.

Of note is that 88% of participants in these SME's are women - with all leadership roles being females as well. Pressure in these rural areas is often on women to meet the daily needs of self, children, family and others.

Essentially, the entrepreneurial capacity of individuals, families and communities is enhanced by promoting a saving culture and increasing access to credit to enable them to embark on income generating activities to sustain and improve their livelihoods.

“The idea is to build up what you get and give back to reach out to others,” says Sr Maryanne, the brains behind the operation. *“This makes people feel loved and cared for. It promotes individual potential and boosts achieving personal ambitions. At the same time, working in collaboration promotes mutual trust, respect and reduces jealousy.”*

Word of mouth has generated much interest in the **Mercy Works** initiative, with people in villages and clans taking their own initiative to mobilise and engage in development activities. Which is how Maria first heard of the idea.

“Accessing money before coming to Mercy Works was really difficult for me and my children,” reveals Maria. *“My family's cash flow was limited, there was not enough money available for us to pay for our needs and wants and earning*



The family who saves together stays together! (L-R) Son Peter, Maria & daughter Wendy Maria

Wendy Maria with her PKG500 loan money and son at Mercy Works Training Room in Mingende



some few kinas from selling garden produce once a while at the local market was not enough. As I am aging, my concern is my children's well-being.”

Maria joined Sr Maryanne's LNBSL through buying shares fortnightly. She received personal loans three times and was able to repay them with service charge within three months.

“I was convinced the financial services the Leave No One Behind Savings and Loans Society provides was the only way I could see myself and my struggling children get out of poverty into creating something new for their future,” says Maria.

Maria had three of her children work with her to access the first loan totalling PKG1,020 (\$438). *“It was indeed a marvellous gift for us to begin,”* she smiles. *“We collaborated and worked as a team by selling more than a thousand buns a day for PKG1 each as well as 120 cans of soft drink at PKG1.20 each at the main bus stop and repaid all three loans within two weeks.”*

The family then applied for a second round of loans, totalling PKG2,250 (\$968).

“My whole life with my children has changed. I see smiles on their faces, I feel good about myself and my children's future. I began to have good sleep in the night, our daily meal has improved, I told them that we will never leave Mercy Works,” says Maria. *“Mercy Works theme ‘Leave No One Behind’ speaks for itself.”*

Maria says all she has ever wished for is her children to have the same quality of life as other families in the village when she is gone. And through **Mercy Works** that is now becoming a reality.

“I hope my children can build permanent houses, own PMV (public Motor Vehicle) buses and other businesses. That is my wish.”

MERCY MUSHROOMS

An additional income generating activity provided through the **Mercy Works** LNBSL is our Mushroom Farming Club - which is engaging children and communities.

Following three days of mushroom training from a Chinese professor in Goroka, the “Leave No One Behind” mushroom business began with a total seed capital of PKG3,000 (\$1,290) for materials and 767 tubers for planting.

After nearly three months of the first planting, money earned reached PKG2,050 (\$881) which was used to

Sr Maryanne tends to Mercy Mushrooms in Simbu

extend the mushroom house and the remaining funds were spent on 800 more tubers for planting.

“The primary purpose is not only to improve nutrition, but to enhance a fast-growing business with children, family and adults. Mercy Mushrooms are growing in popularity and being embraced with open arms and gratitude” reports Sr Maryanne. *“People can't stop talking about them!”*



Ability Not Disability

PROJECT: Katilosa Centre for the Disabled
LOCATION: Bacau, Timor-Leste **PARTNER:** Australian Marist Solidarity
PARTICIPANTS: 199 people with a disability **GOAL:** To contribute to the good health and well-being of people with disabilities in Timor Leste

Julio was thrilled when he was called to teach at Katilosa Centre for the Disabled.

"I thought it was a great opportunity and I would be able to share my skills and knowledge with children with special needs. I am passionate about delivering the best learning methods, but I do struggle because of their limited communication in the classroom," he says, helping a blind boy walk and tap musical beats with a white music stick.

"I want them to understand the programs I teach, so I am doing research into finding the best methodology of teaching disabled children with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome and visual impairment."

Julio says people with disabilities have untapped potential. "Many of us just focus on their disability and not their ability. As a teacher I try to do all of my best to develop their educational ability so they will contribute to the development of Timor-Leste."

(T-B) Student at the Katilosa Centre for the Disabled; A blind student at the Katilosa Centre for the Disabled uses his blind stick to tap beats; Julio Berc Pires, a teacher at Katilosa Centre for the Disabled;

This year, Katilosa has 50 students and Julio teaches them literacy, art and music. "They like to dance too," he says. "We now have 21 students in two groups, one with disabilities and one for down syndrome students, who we have created a special classroom for."

Katilosa was founded in 2000 by Laurentino Guterres, a former interpreter for the UN, who began organising regular meetings. Now the centre has grown to reach hundreds. It also provides physiotherapy, assessments, referrals and support to a wide range of disabilities including amputations, cerebral palsy, developmental disorders, Downs Syndrome, Parkinson's disease and visual impairments. During Covid the centre adapted to a full outreach model with staff visiting homes.

Katilosa also employs people with disabilities, helping to eliminate discrimination. They provide transport each day for their students and some progress to mainstream education. Many families have never received support before, and did not know how to care for their loved ones or understood the high intellectual capacity of those who are non-verbal.

"I find it very helpful because when he learns here – when he comes back home, he's still continuing to learn, particularly with the music," one proud mum says. "He is always singing and always asks for a microphone!"



▲ Maucatar mums and bubs in Timor-Leste

Sisters in the village with eggs for nutrition ▶

THANK YOU!

A VERY BIG thank you to all those who so generously donated to our Chicken & Egg Nutrition July Tax Appeal! We are thrilled we reached our target of \$13,000 which supports our partnership project with the Hospitaler Sisters of Mercy in Maucatar, Timor Leste.

Here, staff work to improve the nutrition of those who attend the Teresa Orsini Maternity Clinic. Eggs are considered one of the main sources of protein in their diet. They also conduct outreach programs to 22 villages, supporting over 1,300

women and children with health education and monitoring and provide nutrition to 50 girls who stay at their hostel.

Sr Gilbert, wanted to thank you all – "By raising egg-laying hens, families are able to raise their income and live a better quality of life. Many of the families have followed the lessons we are teaching. Having a good balanced diet will build a healthy community. We thank all the donors for supporting us – providing the people of Maucatar, especially the mother and children – with lifesaving nutrition. With your help the eggs and hens we provide are sustaining life."

Chair's Report



I take some comfort in the words of Catherine McAuley who said; 'The simplest and most practical lesson I know is to resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow.'

If there is a constant in our lives it is that we are required to deal with change.

In 2022 we took a collective breath of relief after two years of disrupted life brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. No sooner had we seen off the pandemic, new challenges emerged. A war in Ukraine, floods and droughts bringing famine and poverty to millions of people across the globe. Poverty, famine and dislocation brings to the fore our natural concern for all those people affected.

In these times of global uncertainty, it is understandable that we, and our governments focus, on those people close to us. As rational as that may sound, the reality is we are part of a global community and as such our sisters and brothers in need of our care and support extend beyond our borders. We can no more turn a blind eye to those in need here and overseas, than we can to our own family. We are connected through a common humanity, one which is based in the love and care of all people. It is what makes us human, and it is what embodies the spirit of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy.

The news of the world around us can be overwhelming, too big and complex for us as individuals to address. In truth, we cannot address all of the world's problems, but we can make a collective effort to make the world a better place for some.

Mercy Works is one such vessel which makes a difference to the lives of thousands of people both in Australia and the Asia Pacific Region. We have been blessed with strong financial support from our members and donors, which has allowed us to fund important programs across Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste as well as Australia.

We are very proud that our July Tax Appeal was successful in raising the target goal of \$13,000 for our Chicken and Egg Nutritional Appeal for the Teresa Orsini Clinic in the remote, mountainous region of Maucatar, Timor-Leste. This project is simple in design but powerful in impact and is helping save mothers and children from extreme hunger and poor nutrition in one of the poorest nations in the world.

While we are proud of our successes, there is always more work to be done.

With the lockdowns behind us, we must acknowledge that our work this financial year has been impacted by the pandemic. The pandemic has limited our capacity to engage directly with the Mercy family, especially our schools. While the latter part of the financial year has seen a marked increase in activity in our engagement with Mercy schools and the broader Mercy family, we acknowledge that we have some ground to make up.

The Board has asked Sr Sally and her team to prioritise their focus on reconnecting with all the Mercy schools as part of our push to enhance their commitment to **Mercy Works** and the programs we run. This priority is part of a broader strategy to increase the visibility and actions of Mercy Works as we continue to tackle issues of poverty and disadvantage here and overseas.

Through these efforts we hope to achieve a deeper partnership with our Mercy family, especially schools, the students of whom are our future leaders able to take forward the Mercy spirit of care and justice towards the poor and disadvantaged.

While our ambition for **Mercy Works** is high, none of this is possible without the dedication of the **Mercy Works** staff. I want to acknowledge the work of Sr Sally in leading her team of dedicated staff through this challenging period.

Not only has **Mercy Works** supported the poor and disadvantaged, but it has also done so with financial prudence and care. The **Mercy Works** team has been ably supported by the Board and Committee members and I would like to thank them for their support and contributions to the mission of **Mercy Works**. Finally, it is important to acknowledge and thank the Board members who have resigned this year, and in particular the previous chair Kathleen Donnellon, whose stewardship over many years has laid a strong foundation for **Mercy Works**.

Christmas blessings to you all.

Joe Zabar
Board Chair (from November 2021)

2021-22 Key Projects' *Outcomes*

Mercy Works continues our partnerships in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Philippines. In Australia our focus is on refugees and asylum seekers and during the reporting period we partnered with six First Nations projects. From providing education and skills training to health, nutrition and advocacy, here is a snapshot of what Mercy Works achieved in 2021-22FY.

Overseas Projects

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Kiunga Program, PNG

- 19 Village Health Volunteers increased capacity to coordinate the delivery of basic health services in remote villages, resulting in a more coordinated approach to health care.
- Successful introduction of cocoa as cash crop in lowara has seen more farmers engage in cocoa farming, providing sustainable income.
- 199 people participated in the Sex and Gender, Positive Parenting and Marriage Enrichment Program, gaining new skills to live in positive way.
- 15 trained senior teachers appointed as Head Teachers between 2021- 2022.
- An increased number of girls from remote villages accessing secondary and technical education made possible with accommodation at the Girls Hostel. Two students have been accepted to Nursing College, one to business college and nine are continuing their secondary study.
- Adult Literacy project has seen 23 Women from 15 parishes now participate in church liturgies and speak publicly in both English and Tok Pisin.

Simbu Program, PNG

- Overall, the program has empowered the people in remote villages to engage in economic activities and earn income.
- The number of unemployed young individuals engaged in small business and farming have increased significantly. 90 young men, previously engaged in illegal brewing and drugs, were given access to the 30-Kina micro financing loan. Another youth group loaned with one bulb onion tin (500g) earned a total of PGK12,000 and were able to return the seeds back to MW.
- The involvement of youth in self-employment has enabled them to provide meaningful contributions within their community. 21 youth reported they now feel positive about their future. Word of mouth has led to more youth enrolling in the program.
- Farmers engaged in developing cooperatives were supported with marketing their produce to attract regular buyers. One group now regularly supplies thirty bags of cabbage to St Mary's Technical School for PGK40 per bag.
- 1,087 participants involved in 24 Leave No One Behind (LNB) Savings and Loans Society have access to bank services, taking loans and repaying them on time. 888 are women including Office bearers (chair, record keeper, etc).

- A model farm of bulb onion and potato at the base of the state land of Niglkande Local Government has been established. Training was provided to farmers from nursery, planting, post-harvest through to marketing.
- Ongoing training provided to farmers has helped increase productivity, maintained consistency in supply, production and quality control.
- One committed farmer was given an air ticket by a Member of Parliament, witnessing a Kundiawa/Gembogl District Company distribution site in Port Moresby.

TIMOR-LESTE

UAI Lili Computer Centre, Bacau

- 273 students received training in classes including introduction to computers, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and hardware. 15 students graduated and received a certificate, with 131 people continuing with ongoing programs.

Katilosa Community-based rehabilitation & inclusive education for children and young adults with a disability, Bacau

- 199 people with disabilities benefitted from physiotherapy sessions in their homes to improve movement and overall well-being. Families taught to do self-therapy at home between scheduled visits by therapists.
- Information about disability and a better understanding of family members' (or their own) condition has increased confidence to support those with a disability.
- 40 participants with disabilities have improved language, mathematics, agriculture, and physical education skills.

Maucatar Nutritional Project, Cova Lima

- 1172 children, of which 17.5% suffered from moderate malnutrition and 8.95% from severe malnutrition, have received extra protein in their diets
- 161 women and 20 people with disabilities have increased awareness of proper nutrition and hygiene. Participants also gained skills to raise chickens and start a home kitchen garden.
- Increased number of egg laying hens in the communities have significantly increased families' access to egg protein.
- Increased awareness on COVID prevention, including vaccination.

THE PHILIPPINES

Balay Banaag, Davao City

- 15 girls at risk were provided with alternative family environment, enabling them to attend school (both home-schooling and face-to-face), participate in play therapy, psycho-social activities, as well as learn basic life-skills.
- 11 parents/guardians learned parenting skills.
- One girl at risk reintegrated with her family, with the older sibling (a former student at the Centre) now able to care for her younger sibling and send her to school.

Creating Change for Women Through Advocacy, Cebu City

- One Training of Trainers module for Advocates rolled out. 40 participants, including women who have exited from prostitution, completed the training and have signed up to become key Anti-human trafficking advocates who deliver awareness raising in their respective communities.

- An Advocacy Group composed of 22 members from like-minded non-government (NGOs) and inter-faith-based organisations, as well as women survivors of human trafficking, formed for a more co-ordinated approach to advocacy in Cebu.
- Stronger dialogues with government and local officials undertaken in matters of employment, education and health services. Recommendations for new legislation made.
- Mental health services provided for 55 women survivors.
- A study on drivers of human trafficking completed. Findings were used to influence policy recommendations.
- Advocacy materials were produced including posters created by survivors, as well as tee shirts and brochures with a hotline number on where to report cases.

Domestic Projects

INDIGENOUS

Cape York Girl Academy – Wangetti QLD

- 23 young women attended CYGA and 12 iPads were purchased to enhance student learning, including access to Mathletics and Reading Eggs (numeracy and literacy interventions).
- Implementation of OraH and Sentral to track student wellbeing matters and holistic care for students and their dependents across day and boarding leading to increased focus of Case Management and real time data to inform case planning.

Salt and Pepper – Adelaide SA

- 220 women, 20 men and 45 children engaged.
- Regular community luncheons of Aboriginal women, young and Elders, have provided opportunities for women who have recently been released from prison to meet in a culturally safe environment sharing food, stories, and strategies to deal with the complex issues in their lives.
- Women have developed supportive relationships with Elders. COVID has been a challenge for gatherings and prison support visits. The demand for emergency food increased when lunches were unable to be held, fortunately this was already planned for within the budget.
- Increased coordination of services and advocacy for Aboriginal women in prison is progressing as trust develops between prison staff and Salt & Pepper workers.

Nunga Babies Watch Adelaide SA

- NBW Provided physical support for 23 Aboriginal mums, 8 men and 12 children and families.
- The new booklet "Where can I get Help?" has been distributed through legal, health, community, and Aboriginal controlled organisations with extremely positive feedback.
- The community worker has attended multi-agency meetings to support families dealing with DCP and at risk of having children taken away.
- Identification of Advocacy Allies including the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman
- Submission made to SA Parliament to raise awareness of Aboriginal children in care and the lack of kin placement.

Baabayn Mums and Bubs, Mt Druitt NSW

- 21 children attended the Centre on Wednesdays with their mothers on one or more occasions. Of these, 15 are participants in the Bubs program. 17 mums attended the program on one or more occasion.
- Activities focusing on empowerment and self-growth. Mums have formed friendships that continue to outside social activities.
- Many mums appear more confident and have been able to accomplish goals in their life.

Prospering after Prison- Port Augusta SA

- 21 Aboriginal women assisted in development of financial resilience, living skills, cultural healing and community connection by the Sisters of St Anne of Chennai.
- Visits to the APY lands gained understanding of local communities as well as helping during COVID isolation for families impacted.
- Sr Delma Rani is to be appointed the Diocese Chaplain to the Prison by the bishop.
- Centacare are keen to pursue more research into the program and may approach Mercy Works in the future.

Special Measures – Brisbane QLD (incomplete as yet)

- This project has struggled with many delays for a number of reasons to achieve an ambitious completion target.



(L-R) Sr Elizabeth Royan, Sr Sheela Thomas & Sr Delma Rani from our Prospering After Prison Pilot Program supported Indigenous women on parole.

In Kiunga, cocoa crop is being grown as an alternative cash crop.

OUR IMPACT - Mercy Connect

*As listed in Annual Reports in August 2022



Financial Statements

INCOME STATEMENT

For year ended 30 June 2021

	2022	2021
Revenue	\$	\$
Monetary Donations and Gifts		
- From Members	378,660	475,084
- From Other Parties	739,430	852,850
Grants - Other Australian	91,014	274,165
Bequests	33,448	-
Other Income		
- Interest Received	97,765	95,504
- Distribution Received from Investments	93,030	20,180
- Gain on Revaluation of Investments	-	51,756
Total Revenue	1,433,347	1,769,539

Expenditure	\$	\$
International Aid & Development Programs Expenditure		
International Programs		
- Funds to International Programs	353,377	426,008
- Program Support Costs	43,944	57,989
Community Education	42,420	64,716
Public Fundraising Costs	38,064	68,472
Accountability and Administration	146,874	178,426
Other Expenditure	-	559
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure	624,679	796,170
Domestic Program Expenditure (incl Monetary and Non Monetary)	621,714	414,876
Loss on Revaluation of Investments	109,419	-
Total Expenditure	1,355,812	1,211,046
Excess of Revenue Over Expenditure	77,535	558,493

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Assets	\$	\$
Current Assets		
- Cash and Cash Equivalent	262,721	518,928
- Trade and Other Receivables	9,812	16,023
- Financial Assets	2,496,914	2,399,168
- Other Assets	16,216	16,019
Total Current Assets	2,785,663	2,950,138
Non Current Assets		
- Financial Assets	1,230,547	1,096,936
- Property, Plant and Equipment	10,481	2,095
- Right-of-use Assets	9,233	17,756
Total Non Current Assets	1,250,261	1,116,787
Total Assets	4,035,924	4,066,925
Liabilities	\$	\$
Current Liabilities		
- Trade and Other Payables	43,353	140,929
- Other Liabilities	37,069	28,385
- Employee Benefits	135,588	157,740
- Lease Liability	27,620	-
Total Current Liabilities	243,630	327,054
Non Current Liabilities		
- Employee Benefits	12,192	10,830
- Lease Liability	1,890	28,364
Total Non Current Liabilities	14,082	39,194
Total Liabilities	257,712	366,248
Net Assets	3,778,212	3,700,677
Equity	\$	\$
Retained Surplus	3,778,212	3,700,677
Total Equity	3,778,212	3,700,677

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For year ended 30 June 2022

	Retained Earnings	Reserves	Other
Balance as 1 July 2021	3,700,677	-	-
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	77,535	-	-
Balance as 30 June 2022	3,778,212	-	-

The income for our programs comes from a wide variety of donors, including the Sisters of Mercy, associated ministries, Corporations and members of the public. During the year, specified donations have been received for Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, Mercy Connect and other domestic projects.

Obligations for projects carried forward to FY22 are adequately covered by cash and cash equivalents. The delivery of some projects have been interrupted and or deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds have been directed towards the retained earnings and will be used to fund future projects.

The ACFID-Code-compliant financial statements comply with the presentation and disclosure requirements of the ACFID Code of Conduct. Refer to the ACFID Code of Conduct website for further information. <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, accounting standards, provide a true and fair view of their financial position and performance, and that the organisation can pay its debts as and when they become due. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by the Board.

The full statutory financial statements separately from the Annual Report is available on: <https://www.mercyworks.org.au/financial-statements-and-annual-reports/>



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MERCY WORKS LIMITED

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial report of Mercy Works Limited for the year ended 30 June 2022. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that special purpose financial report in our report dated 1 November 2022. That financial report, and the summary financial statements, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on that financial report.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, or the relevant Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of Mercy Works Limited.

The Responsibility of the Board Members for the Summary Financial Report

The Board Members of the entity are responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial report.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of Mercy Works Limited for the year ended 30 June 2022 are consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report.

NOT FOR PROFIT ACCOUNTING SPECIALISTS

KESWICK SA 5035

Ian Mostert CPA

Registered Company Auditor No 539768

Dated: 1 November 2022



Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Our People

Everyone involved in delivering Mercy Works' programs shares an enduring commitment to strengthening communities and delivering positive change for people in need.

OUR BOARD



Mr Joseph Zabar
(Appointed Nov. 2021)
Current Board Chair
Finance Risk and Audit
Committee Member



Mr Travis Bowman
Board Member
Finance Risk and Audit
Committee Chair



Mr Francis Elvey
Board Member
Program Committee
Chair



Sr Catherine Ryan
Board Member



Mr Mark Sleight
Board Member
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member and
Program Committee Member



Mr Steven Collins
(Appointed Nov. 2021)
Board Member
Program Committee
Member



Ms Catherine Glenister
(Appointed Nov. 2021)
Board Member



Ms Kerrie Walshaw
(Appointed Nov. 2021)
Board Member
Program Committee
Member



Mrs Megan Giles
(Resigned Nov. 2021)
Board Member



Mrs Kathleen Donnellon
(Resigned Nov. 2021)
Board Chair
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member



**Sr Duyen Thi My
Nguyen RSM**
(Resigned Nov. 2022)
Board Member

OUR MEMBERS

Elizabeth Moloney RSM
Institute Councillor,
ISMAPNG

Gaye Lennon RSM
Institute Councillor,
ISMAPNG

Catherine Reuter RSM
Leader, Sisters of Mercy
Brisbane

Caroline Ryan RSM
Institute Vicar, ISMAPNG

Maureen Sexton RSM
Institute Councillor,
ISMAPNG

Eveline Crotty RSM
Leader, ISMAPNG

Jennie Ryan RSM
Leader, Sisters of Mercy
North Sydney

Mary-Louise Petro RSM
Leader, Sisters of Mercy
Parramatta

OUR STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bernard Dobson
Program Committee
Member

Therese Canty
Program Committee
Member

Lorraine Asmann
Program Committee
Member

Fiona McKenzie
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member

Michael Cuzic
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member

Christopher Bisset
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member

Andrew Burke
Finance, Risk and Audit
Committee Member

OUR STAFF

MERCY WORKS AUSTRALIA STAFF

Sally Bradley RSM
Executive Director

Anne Foale RSM
(until March 2022)
Program Manager
– Overseas projects

Maria Prescilla
(From March 2022)
Program Manager
– Overseas projects

Clare Bennett
Program Manager –
Indigenous and
Refugee projects
Mercy Connect
Ballarat Coordinator

Martin Binoj
Finance Manager

Sandra Marreiros
Finance and
Administration Officer

Katrina Richardson
Grants Coordinator

Jo Casamento
(From September 2021)
Communications and
Fundraising Coordinator

Paul Taylor
Mercy Connect
Sydney Coordinator

Mary Lewis RSM
Mercy Connect
Melbourne Coordinator

Thathathai Singa
Mercy Connect
Melbourne Assistant
Coordinator

Kristen Soon
(From November 2021)
Mercy Connect
Perth Coordinator

MERCY WORKS LTD PAPUA NEW GUINEA STAFF (MWLPNG)

Maryanne Kolkia RSM
Simbu Coordinator

Stephen Dude
Kiunga Coordinator

Janet Andrew RSM
Finance Assistance
Officer Simbu

Andrew Waike
Officer in Charge of
Agricultural Activities
in Simbu

Gabriellea Kawage
(From August 2022)
Life Skills Trainer
& Publicity Officer

John Rubi
(From August 2022)
Life Skills Trainer
& Publicity Officer

Israel Kua
(From August 2022)
Community Team Leader
& Advocacy Officer

Joseph John
(From August 2022)
Community Team Leader
& Advocacy Officer

Merawo Mauglia
(From August 2022)
Community Team Leader
& Advocacy Officer

Saki Yapa
(From August 2022)
Community Team Leader
& Advocacy Officer

Salume Kup
(From August 2022)
Office Administration
& Trainer

Thank you!

With a little help from our friends...

Particularly, Mercy Works would like to recognise the following who supported us in 2021/2022:

Members

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)
Sisters of Mercy, Brisbane Congregation
Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney Congregation
Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta Congregation

Mercy Organisations

Mater (Townsville)
Mercy Associates and Friends
Mercy Ministry Companions
Sisters of Mercy Newfoundland

Trusts, Foundations and Clubs

Australian Govt Department of Social Services Volunteer Grant
Ballarat Foundation
CCI Giving
City of Parramatta
Collier Charitable Fund
Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Julian Zahara Memorial Fund
Mercy Foundation
Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
NSW Govt Department of Communities and Justice (CBP)
Parramatta Leagues Club

Spencer Gibson Foundation
Siganto Foundation

Other Religious Organisations

Brigidine Sisters
Carmelite Nuns
Catholic Women's League, St Joseph's Branch
Divine Word Missionaries
Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands
Holy Family of Nazareth, Plumpton
Immaculate Conception, Morpeth
Marist Sisters Australia
Mary Immaculate Parish, Blackwater
Our Lady of Rosary Parish, Kyneton
St Joseph's By The Sea, Williamstown
Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, Hurstville

Right across Australia school communities have generously raised funds in response to our Mercy In Action stories to support our projects. Our deep appreciation goes to all the schools that have helped raise money from November 2021 to November 2022.

For your generosity, we thank you!

Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy
All Hallows School, Brisbane
Aranmore Catholic College, Leederville
Aranmore Catholic Primary School, Leederville
Catherine McAuley College, Bendigo
Catherine McAuley College, Westmead
Holy Cross College, Ellenbrook
Holy Family Primary School, Kelso
John Paul College, Kalgoorlie
Marymede Catholic College, South Morang
Mercedes College, Perth
Mercedes College, Springfield
Mercy College Mackay
Mercy College, Mirrabooka
Merici College, Canberra
Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale
Our Lady of Mercy College, Australind
Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg
Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour School
Padbury Catholic School, Padbury
Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes
Sacred Heart Central School, Cootamundra

Sacred Heart College Geelong
Santa Maria College, Melville
St Brendan's Catholic Primary School
St. Anthony's Primary School, Girraween
St. Brigid's College, Lesmurdie
St. Columba's Catholic School, Bayswater
St Columba's Primary School, Adamstown
St. Francis Xavier Primary School, Ballarat East
St. John Fisher College, Bracken Ridge
St. John's Primary School, Lambton
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, North Mackay
St. Joseph's College, Mildura
St. Joseph's School, Stanthorpe
St. Kieran's Catholic Primary School, Tuart Hill
St. Luke's Catholic Primary School, Woodvale
St. Matthew's Catholic School, Mudgee
St. Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills
St. Michael's School, Bassendean
St. Michael's School, Gordonvale
St. Patrick's Primary School, Blacktown
The Cathedral College, Rockhampton
Ursula Frayne Catholic College, Victoria Park





LEAVE A

LASTING
LEGACY

Leaving Mercy Works a gift in your Will is the most powerful and enduring gift you can provide.

Your generous gift – no matter how large or small – means that you leave a legacy that reflects your values and greatest hopes for future generations.

You will make a real, long-lasting difference to the lives of children and families for generations to come.

Your gift will be used with wisdom and integrity through our life-changing programs in education and training, health and social welfare for the most marginalised and vulnerable communities supported by **Mercy Works** and our partners – across Australia and the Asia Pacific.

Learn more by visiting mercyworks.org.au or simply scan the **QR Code** below.

You can also become a *Friend of Mercy* with an annual subscription of \$50 (or more) or make a one-off donation.



SCAN the
QR code
with your
smart phone
to donate



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

See Inside of Flap for mail order.

I want to donate!

I'd like to...

- Become a Friend of Mercy Works
- Renew my Friends of Mercy Works Donation
(Annual Rate \$50)

Personal Details (Please Print)

Name:	
Address:	
State:	Postcode:
Phone:	Mobile:
Email:	

I'd like to give a little more...

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 or \$

All donations to Mercy Works Ltd of over \$2 are tax deductible.

Total Amount (no GST applicable)

Friends Donation + Donation = \$

Payment Details

- Cheque *(payable to Mercy Works Ltd)* **or**
- Credit Card *(please provide your details)*

Card Type

- Visa MasterCard

Card No.

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Name on card:
Expiry date:
Signature:

- From time to time Mercy Works would like to send you information about our activities. If you DO NOT wish to receive this information please tick this box.
- I would like to receive information about remembering Mercy Works in my will.

Completed Forms

Forms can be mailed with your Friends Donation in the reply paid envelope provided. If using your own envelope please add stamp and mail to:

Mercy Works Ltd
PO Box 2023 North Parramatta NSW 1750