



the **Bilum** Mercy Works

SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA | JUNE 2015

MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS:

WHAT'S  
BEEN  
ACHIEVED?

PLUS!  
CHANGES  
IN KIUNGA



# MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY  
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## Mission Statement

Mercy Works supports the local and overseas relief and development activities that are part of the vision and mission of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea. The programs engage in partnerships with communities to promote justice, self reliance and to support displaced people and communities who are denied access to basic resources such as education, health care and social welfare. Mercy Works Programs strongly endorse the principles of freedom, mutual respect, environmental sustainability, participation and protection of the rights and responsibilities of all.

## Direction

In *Australia*, Mercy Works offers community education in world development concerns, provides assistance with refugees, and works in partnership with Indigenous peoples. *Overseas*, the primary focus is in the South East Asia-Pacific region where, in collaboration with local partners, Mercy Works directs its efforts towards the education, health care, and social and spiritual well-being of those who are poor or displaced.

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## The Bilum

The Mercy Works magazine, published twice a year in June and December, is sent to friends, donors and partners of Mercy Works.

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**Design:** Purple House Design



ACFID  
MEMBER

We are a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and as such committed to the ACFID Code of Conduct for Australian aid and development organisations. See [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au)

Cover: *Woman in the Mt Hagen market, Papua New Guinea*

## The Bilum

In Papua New Guinea, bilums or handwoven string bags have been crafted and used by people for hundreds of years to carry their most precious and essential belongings. *The Bilum* carries and communicates the stories of the people involved in the many projects supported by Mercy Works. See what's inside our bilum this issue...

### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



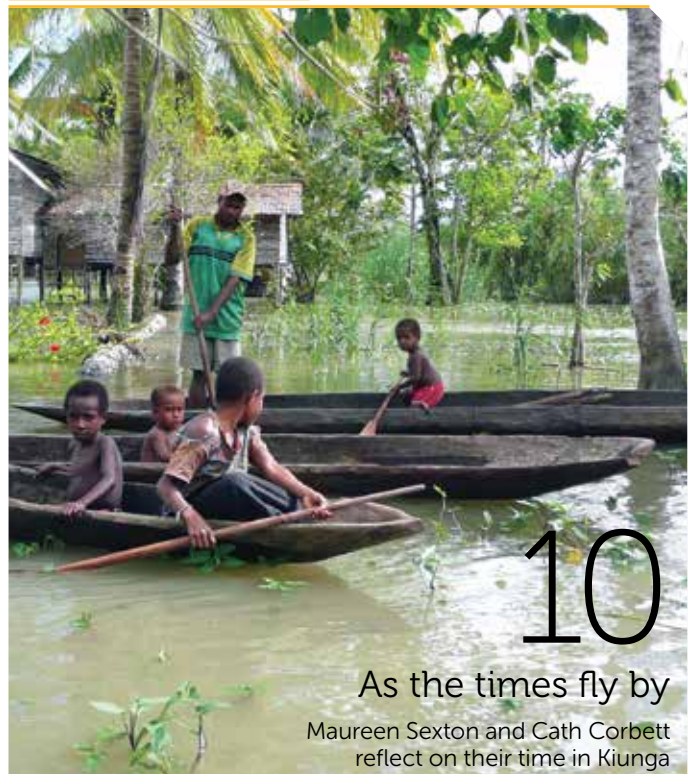
## 6

Scoring Goals  
Progress on the Millennium Development Goals and how we've helped

### REGULARS

- 3 From the ED
- 4 News
- 9 In Focus
- 14 In the Community
- 16 Back Page

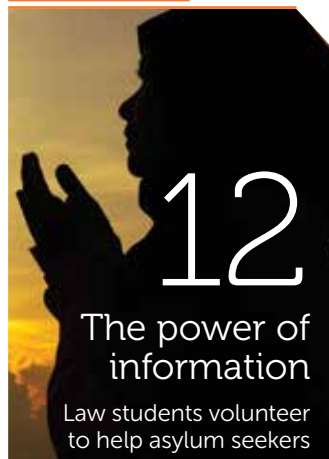
### PAPUA NEW GUINEA



## 10

As the times fly by  
Maureen Sexton and Cath Corbett reflect on their time in Kiunga

### AUSTRALIA



## 12

The power of information  
Law students volunteer to help asylum seekers

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# Teamwork for achieving goals



*When it comes to supporting impoverished communities teamwork takes all shapes and sizes: from communities supporting each other to achieve goals, to schools working together to raise funds, to a global commitment to action. Teamwork helps us to be our best, as individuals and a society.*

**I**n my younger days I regularly played netball. I loved the thrill of the competition, the capacity to work as a team and the joy of consistent physical exercise. As I did not have the skill of a shooter I usually played in the centre or on the wing. I was pleased to be able to deliver the ball safely to the shooter and then hoped that her skill made the ball go straight through the goal.

Fifteen years ago the United Nations set the Millennium Development Goals. They were to:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equity and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Encourage global partnership and development.

On the United Nations website you can see that much progress has been made towards achieving these goals. Unfortunately, however, in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, the two countries that are the focus of Mercy Works' activities, progress has not kept pace with that of other developing countries. In this edition of *The Bilum* you can read about how well (or not) these countries are doing.

Also, as you read the articles you can see that Mercy Works is trying hard to address the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals. A new education project is about to begin in PNG;

great work is being done in Kiunga and we are increasing our efforts to extend the early childhood learning centres in Timor-Leste.

Unfortunately, there are also communities within Australia that do not enjoy the living conditions we expect all citizens to have. You can read how Mercy Works is assisting an indigenous community on Bathurst Island, supporting students from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds in Perth, and helping asylum seekers in Adelaide.

The United Nations is in the process of launching further goals for the coming years. In his 2014 report, Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary General said 'the MDG's have been the greatest anti-poverty push in history. New partnerships have been established. And now, we must finish the job.' Mercy Works intends to continue to assist in the achievement of the goals. As with netball, teamwork is required.

Mercy Works would be much the poorer without the many people who play a vital role in our team. The generosity of donors, those who conduct fundraising activities, and our many volunteers help to keep us going in the right direction. Your commitment and generosity is much appreciated.

In 15 years we hope that the citizens of Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and the current disadvantaged people of Australia will be in a much better position. That is the goal. Let us work to achieve it.

**Ailsa Mackinnon** RSM AM  
Executive Director

'The Millennium Development Goals have been the greatest anti-poverty push in history. New partnerships have been established. And now, we must finish the job.'

**Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary General**

IN BRIEF



Some of the speakers at the Extraordinary Women event celebrating International Women's Day

### Empowering women

For International Women's Day, staff from Mercy Works joined women from the Hills area of Sydney for 'Extraordinary Women', a day celebrating the achievements of women, held at Castle Hill RSL Club. The event was organised and hosted by Dr Annemarie Christie with the aim of promoting leadership for women and encouraging women to use their natural skills and abilities to better society. Six highly successful women from different backgrounds shared their stories at the event. A number of charities benefited from the funds raised on the day including Mercy Works. We were delighted to receive \$5,000. ■

### On a winning ticket

Sacred Heart Parish, Inverell in northern NSW has long been a supporter of our Women's Leadership Program in Kiunga. Each year they raise funds for the project and in 2014 they surpassed themselves, raising \$4,500. Over \$3,000 of that was raised by raffling a Weber BBQ. Volunteers went out in all weather and endured hours of sitting in the hot sun to sell tickets and accept donations. Support came from all corners of the local community. Sr Coral Hedley has some good advice for anyone running a raffle: 'do the tickets up in lots of 10 if you're getting people to sell them. It's an easy number to sell and they can always come back for more'. ■

## New education program in PNG

We are delighted to announce that Mercy Works is undertaking a major new education program in PNG. This program involves the following key projects.

### Access to education: tertiary scholarship

This will provide access to education for capable students with a good academic record who have potential but limited or no access to tertiary education. Support will include travel, tuition and accommodation fees and a small living allowance.

### Building dormitories

We are building dormitories to provide secure environments for students from remote villages in a number of locations: St Gabriel's Technical Secondary School, Kiunga in Western Province; Maria Hilf Vocational Training Centre, Kainantu in Eastern Highlands Province; and Fatima Secondary School, Banz in Jiwaka Province (previously part of Western Highlands Province).

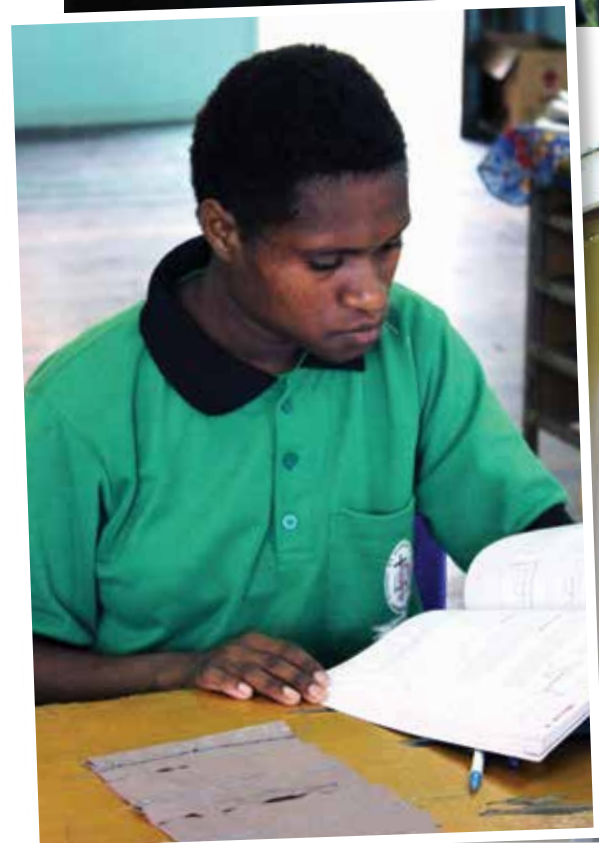
### Remote teachers: training and ongoing support

One activity will help young people from remote villages to train as teachers and then return to teach in their local communities. A second activity involves establishing a network for teachers in remote areas to provide further support through social media and training.

### Informal education, training and development

In addition to providing some funding for our activities in Goroka and Mt Hagen, this project will establish basic skills development programs and support for street children in Port Moresby.

More news about these exiting projects will be available later in the year. ■



## In a league of their own

At their Queensland State Conference last year, the Catholic Women's League (CWL) heard from Sister Denise Hinton, who spoke about her experience at Curtin Detention Centre working with asylum seekers. As a result of the talk, the QLD CWL decided to raise funds to help Mercy Works' projects supporting asylum seekers. Over the course of 2015 every branch of CWL in the Brisbane Diocese will hold a fund raising event to support our work with asylum seekers. ■

## A warm welcome

In April Mercy Works' Finance Manager, Linda Sassine opened the doors of her new home to friends and neighbours. Instead of a traditional house-warming, Linda held a fund-raising event for Mercy Works. Around 100 people attended, each paying a \$50 donation to Mercy Works. Linda and her family generously supplied all the food and drinks at the event, putting on a spectacular spread. In all \$10,000 was raised for our projects – a remarkable result. ■

More pictures of the event can be found on [f /MercyWorksLtd](https://www.facebook.com/MercyWorksLtd)

If you'd like to hold a Mercy Works fundraiser in your home, let us know and we'll provide whatever support we can. Email our Development Officer Margaret Coulter on [mwdo@mercy.org.au](mailto:mwdo@mercy.org.au) or call (02) 9564 1911.



*Clockwise: Sr Gaye Lennon addresses students at St Gabriel's College, Kiunga; the dormitories at Yarapos; repair work being done at Yarapos; a student at St Gabriel's Kiunga*



*Linda Sassine and her mother at their fundraising event in Linda's home.*

# Scoring GOALS

*In 1990 the United Nations Development Program set some ambitious concrete targets for improving the lives of people threatened by hunger and disease. The Millennium Declaration set eight Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015.*

Mercy Works has always supported these goals. In our own small way we have sought to help achieve them. Now 2015 is upon us, so it's worth reviewing whether the goals have been met, how the countries in which we support programs have fared and what Mercy Works has done to help.



**1** In 1990 close to half the people in developing regions lived on less than \$1.25 a day. By 2010 this rate had dropped to 22%. While this is a very good result, progress around the world has been uneven. The proportion of undernourished people around the world fell from 23.6% in 1990–1992 to 14.3% in 2011–2013. Most of this progress was made in the 1990s and has since slowed.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half the population still lives on less than \$1.25 a day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27% of the population is living on less than \$1.25 a day</li> </ul>

## How we've helped

In Goroka and Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea, our skills training programs have helped people learn new skills to establish small businesses and lift their ability to earn money. We've helped communities along the Fly River in PNG establish more sustainable crops (rice instead of sago).



*Clockwise: Women from Matkomai, PNG celebrate graduating from their literacy course; a mother with her baby in Timor-Leste; young school children in Timor-Leste.*



**2** In developing regions, the net enrolment rate for primary education increased from 80% in 1990 to 90% in 2012. 781 million adults and 126 million youth worldwide still lack basic literacy skills, and more than 60% of these are women.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net primary school enrolments rose to 88% by 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross enrolment ratios increased from 66.3% in 1990 to 74.4% in 2007</li> </ul>

## How we've helped

One of the challenges for primary school students in Timor-Leste is that classes are conducted in Tetun and then later in Portuguese. Most children in remote regions only speak their local language at home, making learning at school difficult. Our Early Learning Centres expose children to Tetun, which helps when they start infant school. The centres also help children learn how to behave in class and respond to teachers.





**4** The global rate of under-five mortality in 2012 was almost half that of 1990, dropping from 90 to 48 deaths per thousand live births. While this was substantial progress, the two thirds target will not be met.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant mortality dropped from 60 to 45 deaths per 1000 live births</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant mortality dropped from 82 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 57 in 2006</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

In Timor-Leste our nutrition program in early-childhood learning centres has helped ensure young children get the vital nutrients they need to grow healthy and strong. The Village Health Program in the Fly region of PNG has helped communities improve hygiene and health standards.



**5** While maternal deaths have fallen substantially in developing countries (from 430 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 230 in 2013) this falls short of the target set (108). Most pregnant women in developing regions see a skilled health provider at least once but only half receive the recommended four antenatal checkups.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rate of maternal mortality is falling but remains alarmingly high. In 2009 there were 557 deaths per 100,000 live births</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The maternal mortality ratio in PNG is one of the highest in the world. It's expected to be 703 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

The Village Health Program in the Fly region includes the training of Village Birth Attendants. After training, these volunteers walk long distances between remote villages, carrying basic kits to help establish hygienic conditions and assist with births. Their success rate in helping deliver babies has been remarkable.



**3** In 2012, all developing regions achieved, or were close to achieving, gender parity in primary education. Gender disparities are larger in secondary education than in primary. In tertiary education ratios have improved but considerable disparities remain.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a higher proportion of girls to boys in primary and secondary education, but at the tertiary level there are only 83 women to every 100 men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls enrolments are at 70.2% but are still lower than boys enrolments at 78.2%</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

The Women's Leadership program in Kiunga PNG provides skills training for women, including budgeting and marketing. There is also a low cost child-care centre to help women with young children. Between 2010 and 2012 we funded a project helping the women of Matkomnai learn to read and write in their own language for the first time.



Above: Eaglewood saplings for the plantation outside Ktiunga, PNG. Inset: Sr Maryanne Kolkia during one of her radio broadcasts



World consumption of ozone-depleting substances decreased by over 98% between 1986 and 2013. Over 2.3 billion more people have gained access to an improved source of drinking water since 1990. However global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by almost 50% since 1990.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2007 only 60% of the population had access to clean water. The target of 78% with access by 2015 probably won't be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of this goal in PNG is very difficult because of conflicting views on environmental issues</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

We continue to support the Eaglewood Plantation located in the Fly River region of PNG. Eaglewood is highly prized for its perfume and incense and PNG is one of the last areas in the world where it grows naturally. The plantation is being developed as a sustainable resource within the natural rainforest.



Official development assistance stood at \$134.8 billion in 2013, the highest level ever recorded. 30% of the world's youth are digital natives, active online for at least five years.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timor-Leste is still categorised as a Least Developed Country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most aspects of this goal can still not be monitored effectively in PNG</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

Our projects in both PNG and Timor-Leste coupled with our educational activities in Australia have played a small role in raising awareness of the desperate needs of communities in these, our near neighbours. We are also helping fund an ambitious project at Mercy Secondary School Yarapos to provide wireless internet across the school connected to a satellite dish. ■

Information sourced from [undp.org](http://undp.org)

## THE FUTURE

### What's next?

Discussions are still underway to finalise goals for beyond 2015. These will have the main aims of eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development under the title of Sustainable Development Goals.



The HIV incidence rate (new infections per year per 100 people aged 15 – 49) in developing countries has fallen from 0.1 in 2001 to 0.06 in 2012. 9.5 million people in developing regions were receiving treatment in 2012. If that momentum is maintained the world will reach the objective of 15 million people on antiretroviral therapy by the end of 2015.

Between 2000 and 2012, malaria mortality rates fell by 42%. The target of halting the spread and reversing the incidence of TB is expected to be achieved by the end 2015.

Between 2000 and 2012, malaria mortality rates fell by 42%. The target of halting the spread and reversing the incidence of TB is expected to be achieved by the end 2015.

Timor-Leste	PNG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence of HIV/AIDS is relatively low</li> <li>Incidences of malaria fell from 206 per 1,000 in 2007 to 113 per 1,000 in 2012</li> <li>TB remains a major health issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malaria and HIV/AIDS are now the leading causes of death in PNG</li> <li>TB has a high community transmission rate and children account for over 30% of cases</li> </ul>

### How we've helped

Our drop in centres in Goroka and Mt Hagen in PNG provide counselling, support and information access to treatment for HIV/AIDS. Our radio broadcasts also provide information on disease control and where to access help.



Young boys in the village of Aitos where an Early Learning Centre has opened.



## TIMOR-LESTE

# Supporting education

Our programs in Timor-Leste have focused on helping this young country as it strives to reach the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education. Following the success of our Early Learning Centres in Fohorem (opened in August 2007), Datorua (opened in 2010) and Taroman (opened in 2013), two more centres have opened. Building in remote locations is always a challenge. Sourcing materials and securing reliable builders locally helps the communities feel a sense of ownership of the school, however this is not easy. The challenges are compounded by the weather. During the wet season, the dirt roads become impossible to travel and building work can often grind to a halt.

### Aitos

Close to Fohorem, this village is accessible by a rock strewn dirt track. On foot, it takes around 50 minutes to walk there from Fohorem (in good weather). We have opened a school in an existing building that has been converted for the purpose. Around 20 young children are attending the school. We are still exploring the feasibility of building a new facility in the village, but this will depend on securing land and the number of children who might attend.

### Aiadabaslala

Our most recent school opened here in January. It's in the subdistrict of Atabae to the west of Maliana. Like our other centres, this one has two classrooms, a teacher room/storeroom, two toilets and a kitchen. The site has access to water for the toilet and the kitchen which means meal preparation and washing of dishes are relatively easy. The centre is going well and already has around 60 children attending.

### Teacher training

Building Early Learning Centres is only half the task. Training teachers is a vital part of ensuring a school's ongoing success. In addition to participating in the TaLiHa program we have also helped some teachers attend Montessori workshops to bring some Montessori methodologies into the schools. Getting teachers onto Government contracts for their salaries is a challenge. We still have to support the salaries for some of the teachers and the teaching assistants.

### Nutrition program

The centres are also addressing the Development Goal to eradicate extreme hunger. At each centre, we ensure the young children receive a meal including a powdered vitamin supplement. ■

# AS THE TIMES fly by



*Our activities in Kiunga, on the Fly River in PNG have seen some great results, thanks to the energy and dedication of the remarkable people who have been running them.*

**M**aureen Sexton went to Kiunga in 2003 as a volunteer for Mercy Refugee Service. Shortly after, Catherine Corbett came to work with women in the Kiunga Diocese who live along the Fly River.

In 2010/11 moves were made to merge their projects with other Mercy Works activities. The Mercy Works Kiunga Program became a partnership with the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga. Cath returned to Australia late last year. In July Maureen will end her tenure as the co-ordinator of the program and Steven Dude will take over. Here they talk to us about their experiences.

Maureen Sexton

#### **How has Kiunga changed during your time there?**

'Since the oil and gas boom 3-4 years ago the town has grown from 10,000 to over 45,000. There are many benefits: improved infrastructure, health and education facilities. On the negative side there is evidence of displacement: drug and alcohol abuse and serious violence are on the rise. For the West Papuans along the border, some significant steps have been taken. While the Government is reiterating

previous restrictions, they have recognised that children born here have universal rights and they are able to access education.'

#### **Which Mercy Works projects have had the most impact?**

'The Village Health Program has moved from limited involvement in a pilot project with village birth attendants to skilling up a core group of nurses as trainers of the Village Health Volunteer Program. Volunteers have been trained in two sub health centre areas (12 villages). By mid-2016 this number will be doubled.'

The 'Building Peace' program, Family Life, conducted by David and Miriam is on a solid footing. Travelling all over the Diocese, David and Miriam have moved from bringing couples into parish centres to taking anger management skills training out to villages.

The beneficiaries of tertiary education sponsorships have performed well above expectations. Most have come back into the district and have found employment in areas of need especially nursing and teaching in remote areas.



*Clockwise from the left: an early morning in Kiunga; Maureen Sexton with some trainees; Steven Dude, the new co-ordinator for the Kiunga Program; Cath Corbett on one of her patrols along the Fly River.*

### What will you miss most?

Without a doubt the people I have engaged with. Being part of an active faith community has fed my soul and spirit. After being involved in all aspects of program management I don't feel I am the master (mistress) of anything, but I have become quite a good jack of all trades.

### Cath Corbett

'I arrived in 2004 as a pastoral worker with refugees from West Papua. This meant not only working with West Papuan women but all the women in the parish which extends to 15 villages down the Fly River.

'It was a great privilege to see women hold a pen in their hands for the first time and try to write their names and to hear women talking about how they felt undervalued, often not seeing themselves as a person but as an object. It takes great courage to stand up for your rights when society does not put value on you. I saw women challenge these beliefs and take steps to change. I also witnessed the enthusiasm of small children coming to childcare for the first time.

'Visiting the villages (going on patrol) meant travelling the river in a dinghy. One time the water in the river was so low we were told we would need to get out and push the dinghy through the mud. I stayed in the dinghy as I could see the men sinking knee deep and thought if I got out, I would

disappear in the mud. Another time there was so much rain you could not see land anywhere, if we overturned I might have disappeared altogether.

'The welcomes I received on each patrol were special moments for me. I thank my God, the women, children and the people who treated me with such respect, for a very special time in my life.'

### Steven Dude

A West Papuan refugee, Steven has first hand experience of the many issues faced by the local communities. His family is from the Jaya Pura District of West Papua in Indonesia. His parents came to PNG in 1984, fleeing mistreatment by Indonesian security forces. Steven was born in the Black Wara refugee camp in Sandaun Province and then grew up at the East Awin Refugee Location Centre in Western Province. After 12 years he came to Kiunga and became involved with the Mercy programs while at school: seeking assistance with fees and information about school. In 2012 he undertook a research project for Mercy Works and went on to be employed for 3 days a week, including a role as a trainer for the Village Health Project.

'I'd like to learn as much as I can from Sr Maureen before she leaves,' said Steven. 'One of the biggest challenges for me is my status as a refugee. The good news is that the PNG Government is allowing those recognised as "official refugees" to register their names and apply for citizenship.' ■

# THE power OF INFORMATION

*For asylum seekers ensuring they provide the right information when applying for Temporary Protection Visas is vital. Fortunately some wonderful law students volunteered to lend a hand at Mercy House of Welcome.*



In December last year changes to the Australian refugee laws came into effect, and have had a significant impact on asylum seekers, including the re-introduction of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). A TPV is valid for up to three years and enables someone to work and access Medicare. However they have to reapply every three years and will not be eligible for permanent protection under the present Federal government. They are also not eligible for family reunion.

These changes have meant additional stress and confusion for the asylum seekers who come to Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide. When applying for a TPV, it is essential that the information asylum seekers give matches the information they first provided in their interview on arrival in Australia. If it differs, their TPV application will be refused. This places many asylum seekers at a considerable disadvantage. They

arrived here highly-stressed, afraid, tired and hungry and are in no position to remember clearly what they said in this initial interview.

## Law students to the rescue

Fortunately students from Adelaide Law School volunteered to provide pro-bono help to the asylum seekers. It is a measure of how frightened many asylum seekers are that they needed reassurance from our staff that the students were not from the government but volunteers who were there to help.

The first stage has been to assist with Freedom of Information (FOI) applications to access the recordings of the initial interviews. Since January, 10 students have been helping the asylum seekers at Mercy House of Welcome with their FOI applications. Over 70 applications have been completed and some recordings of these interviews have now arrived. Most come in the form of audio on CD.



*Inset images: law students working with asylum seekers at Mercy House of Welcome.*

# Connection made!



*Two of our new Mercy Connect volunteers at the training day in Perth*

## Creating transcripts

Once the audio interviews are transcribed, the asylum seekers can complete and submit their TPV application with the help of migration lawyers. This ensures the information they provide is consistent with the responses they gave in their initial interview. ■

## CAN YOU HELP?

### Transcribers needed

Transcribing the audio files is a slow and lengthy process. If you are in the Adelaide area, have access to your own computer and some experience in transcribing, your help is urgently needed. Some legal knowledge would be beneficial but it is not essential. Please email Sr Mary Symonds on [marysymo@tpg.com.au](mailto:marysymo@tpg.com.au)

We are happy to report that the Mercy Connect Perth program is up and running. Jennifer Davies, the Coordinator of Mercy Connect Perth was recruited in November 2014. For Jennifer, the role of Volunteer Coordinator has brought together her varied work experience in education and volunteer coordination. 'It's been great to be involved in the Perth program from the start and I'm very much looking forward to helping it build up and expand,' she said.

Jennifer has put her skills to immediate use. After some intense training in Sydney and Perth to help her become familiar with the Mercy Connect program, she set about advertising for and recruiting volunteers in January. Notices and advertisements were placed with a number of volunteer and refugee websites and publications resulting in over 60 expressions of interest.

The first volunteer training sessions were held in February, taking place over two days with 22 people attending. The training covered topics such as the global context of refugees

in Australia, barriers to learning for refugee students, literacy and English as Another Language strategies and numeracy strategies. The volunteer training days went well, with respondents reporting they found the sessions relevant, informative and useful.

### Young volunteers

'It was good to see so many younger volunteers getting involved in the program,' said Jennifer. 'We have eight volunteers in the 19 to 35 age group and five in the 36-49 age group, which is a great spread. The volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds. There are some part-time and retired teachers, but there are also uni students studying education and others working in un-related fields but with tutoring and youth experience.'

The volunteers are now placed in six schools (five primary and one secondary) and feedback so far has been excellent. 'The schools have been really appreciative, and the volunteers seem to be relating very well to the students'. ■

## VOLUNTEER

### Interested in helping Mercy Connect Perth?

If you would like to join the volunteer program in Perth you can get more information from our website: [www.mercyworks.org.au](http://www.mercyworks.org.au). Alternatively message us on [f /MercyWorksLtd](https://www.facebook.com/MercyWorksLtd) or email Jennifer on [mercyconnectp@mercy.org.au](mailto:mercyconnectp@mercy.org.au)



A LESSON IN THE

# spirit of Mercy

The eighth Millennium Development Goal is about a global partnership for development. While we don't work at a government level, Mercy Works continues to build relationships with schools helping to raise awareness of development issues and raising funds for our program. This also helps students at schools with a Mercy heritage connect with Mercy values. These are just some of the schools that are engaged with our programs.

## Mercedes College, Perth

A long-time and generous supporter of Mercy Works, the College undertakes a range of fundraising activities throughout the year. 'Every year we do the "Frog Jog",' said Deputy Principal Faith & Mission, Rosa Speranza. 'Our students used to wear green uniforms and so were known locally as "frogs". The students and staff run, ride or walk around the bridges in Perth to raise funds. There's a real sense of school spirit at the event. We try to instil in our students a sense of being "other-centred" rather than self-centred, and hope our students leave the school with a strong orientation to altruism.'

Last year, as a warm up to the Frog Jog, the students set a world record for the most number

of people lunging simultaneously – 802 people. Students donated a gold coin to participate and an extra \$1,000 was raised for Mercy Works.

## Catholic College Bendigo

Catholic College Bendigo continues to be one of our biggest supporters. Each term the school has one particular focus for fundraising. All fundraising in Term 3 is dedicated to Mercy Works. The annual Mercy Works Golf Day is an opportunity to promote both Mercy Works and the school in the broader community. "What is good about Mercy Works is that it provides a real connection for the students to the specific project to which their money supports, such as the boarding school in Yarapos last year," said Trish Schofield, the school's Director of Catholic Identity. 'The photos and information provided by Mercy Works show that our fundraising makes a real difference. There is a direct connection with the Mercy ethos and it helps our students understand that the Mercy community is broader than just schools.'

In addition to student fundraising, the staff at Catholic College Bendigo are also incredibly generous. Many staff members donate to Mercy Works by salary deduction.



While this simply goes on in the background with little fanfare, their amazing support is never forgotten.

## Catherine McAuley, Westmead

'The whole idea of Mercy Works is entwined in programs in our school,' said Maria Ekde, House Patron. 'We have focused on developing an understanding of the issues behind our fundraising activities so our students have a



*Clockwise from left: Runners from Mercedes College hit the Perth Streets in their annual "Frog Jog"; members of the Social Justice Group at St John's Frankston East; golfers enjoying the Catholic College Bendigo Golf Day; book sale at Catherine McAuley, Westmead. Below: putting on a brave face at St Joseph's, Mackay.*



For example, to raise funds for the Early Childhood Learning Centres in Timor-Leste we held a water and rice day where only water and rice were available from the canteen. Talks from Mercy Works at our school assembly, along with photos and videos all help ensure the girls know where the money they raise is going.'

### St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, North Mackay

As part of their Mercy Day celebrations, a dedicated group of Year 5 students put on a mini funfair with stalls including: ice creams, loom bands, cakes and slices, face painting, pop corn, fairy floss and drinks. In addition to providing great fun (and a chance to unleash their painting skills on some adult faces!) these amazing students raised \$894.

### St John's Catholic Primary School, Frankston East

The Student Social Justice Group sold icy-poles every week and raised \$500 for Mercy Connect Melbourne. They wanted to show their appreciation for the work of the four Mercy Connect volunteers working at their school. The teachers also raised funds by holding a raffle.

### Sacred Heart Central School, Cootamundra

Nurturing a strong sense of social justice is a core value at Sacred Heart, and it was demonstrated when they held a "Rice Day" and raised an impressive \$1,200.

### St Therese's Primary School, New Lambton

For "Blue Day" students came to school wearing blue and enjoyed eating ice cream cones to raise funds. Year 4 students also made crafts to sell.


### Holy Cross College, Ellenbrook

Frayne House at the school had a fundraiser and raised \$1,098 for Timor-Leste. ■

## SPEAKERS

### Are you fundraising for Mercy Works?

If you're planning fundraising activities for Mercy Works, send us pictures and information. You can also post images and share tips on our Facebook page:

 /MercyWorksLtd

clear idea what they are raising funds for. We use our form, house and school assemblies to help educate the girls about the causes we are fundraising for. In each term, a different house takes control of the learning program and fundraising activity. Over the course of the school year, everyone gets to see what it is like to take on an organisation, educate about its activities and lead fundraising. We try to link our activities to the causes that are being supported.

# A PLACE TO play AND learn

*One of the young students enjoying the Pwakayini Program*

Pwakayini is a program that Mercy Works supports at the preschool at Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Primary School on Bathurst Island. Located 80km to the north of Darwin, the island is home to the Tiwi people. We spoke to Jo Moller, the Pwakayini teacher at the school about how the program has been going.

'It's been going really well,' she reported. 'Enrolments are now up to 38, which is really good. It's a non-compulsory program so it's great to get so many children coming.' Thanks to the family engagement part of the program, more and

more parents are comfortable with coming to the school with their children, dropping them off, collecting them and staying to take part in some of the activities. The activities include sand play, painting and fun with play dough. The children can access the toys and equipment they want and are comfortable setting up what they want to play with.

'To begin with the parents were a bit scared of what we are doing,' said Jo, 'but they are getting more used to it and some are asking questions about how their children are going. We're setting up a gardening program and one of the fathers planted seeds with the children. He even

helped out by chopping a tree down that had blown over in the wind. The children love having their parents here.'

The family engagement program gets the children's parents and family members involved in cooking and meal preparation. 'It's also an opportunity to explain what we are doing and why we're doing it.' The children are well fed at the school with access to a range of healthy foods. 'They love their fruit!'

Pwakayini is also introducing some joint excursions with the families and teachers from the school. There have been swimming trips to the pool

which the children have particularly enjoyed. The beaches on the island, although beautiful, are too dangerous for swimming (crocodiles and sharks abound!).

'We are planning a trip to Turruntipi Beach,' said Jo. 'We'll be hunting for bush tucker food to plant in our preschool garden, so the children gain more knowledge of the plants they can grow and eat.'

The indigenous teachers' assistants play a vital role in the program. 'Lily and Jolene are marvellous,' said Jo, 'as well as acting as translators, they also provide great ideas for activities.' ■