



the **Bilum** Mercy Works

**PLUS:**  
2015-16  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA | DECEMBER 2016

**EMPOWERING  
WOMEN**



# 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.

## Mercy Works

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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.

**Editor:** Maria Rallis

**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)

## 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...

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Empowering girls and women as actors and agents of lasting change



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# Stories of strong women

*Empowering women to participate fully across all areas of life is essential not only as it is a human right but because it leads to poverty reduction and stronger communities.*



As I write this report I am conscious that the media is filled with giving us much air play on the progress of the American elections. If Hillary Clinton becomes the United States President her name will go down in history as the first ever female President of the most powerful country in the world. Leaving aside what we may think of her politics she is to be admired for her tenacity, drive and ambition. She has overcome many odds to reach the level of influence she now has. Her experiences as wife of a former President and Secretary of State have given her a wealth of knowledge which will stand her in good stead in her leadership. It will be interesting to watch what influence she will have as a woman in such a position, if elected.

This edition of *The Bilum* is dedicated to telling stories of the many strong women involved in the Mercy Works activities. Be it in creative assistance of refugees and asylum seekers or in striving to receive a sound education in a land such as Papua New Guinea, where, as a woman, the odds are stacked against you, all these stories are inspiring.

Goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals aims to achieve gender equality by ending all forms of violence and discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. Women's empowerment is a pre-condition for this and every effort must be made to cut the roots of gender discrimination wherever they appear.

A woman I learnt about when I was a child was Helen Keller. She has always been an inspiration

to me. In spite of her many disabilities she was able to achieve so much in her life and assistance to people such as herself has changed because of her efforts. In her humility she is quoted as having said 'when we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another'.

Two strong women who have worked long and hard in Mercy Works are retiring from their positions. We owe a debt of gratitude to Sister Helen Nolen RSM and Sister Lorraine Phelan RSM. Both these women have been most influential in helping to guide Mercy Works since its inception. Helen has done marvellous work in Timor-Leste, firstly in Fohorem and latterly in the Maliana district. Lorraine has been instrumental in developing the Mercy Works services to refugees and asylum seekers from early beginnings in Sydney to many parts of Australia. Thank you Helen and Lorraine.

The saying goes that behind every good man is a good woman. The reverse is true as well. When men and women work together for good so much is achieved. As I wish you all a very Happy Christmas I also thank you, our benefactors, both men and women, for your continuing support. I also thank the staff and directors for their dedication and hard work. For without you, Mercy Works would not be able to achieve its aim of enabling people, especially, women, to live more fulfilling lives.

**Ailsa Mackinnon** RSM AM

*Executive Director*

When men and women work together for good so much is achieved.

IN BRIEF



St Patrick's students displaying their green thumb skills

### Mercy Girls in Action

In true Mercy spirit, the students at St Patrick's College in Townsville have been generously giving up their time and talents in Mercy action and in fundraising. Mercy Works Day was held at the school on September 12 and their activities saw the girls visit numerous not-for-profit organisations in their local community, including the RSL Care Centre at Palleranda where greenery was planted to help beautify the area for the residents. Their fundraising activities included a Fashion Faux Pas show which not only brought a lot of laughs but also helped raise close to \$1000 for our Home of Hope in Kiunga. ■

### Workplace Giving

Make a big difference with a small donation from your pay by signing up to support Mercy Works via your workplace giving program. Donations are made automatically from your pre-tax pay which means you receive an instant tax benefit without the need to keep receipts. Just ask your payroll manager for a copy of your organisation's Workplace Giving sign-up form or direct them to [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) for instructions on how to set it up in your workplace. It's one of the easiest ways to make an important contribution to communities in need. ■

## A warm thank you

Our Mercy Connect Sydney project was the beneficiary of several generous grants through the NSW ClubGrants Scheme. This year a total of \$51,722.87 was allocated by the following clubs:

- Ashfield Catholic Club
- Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club
- Club Merrylands Bowling Group
- Dooleys Catholic Club
- Parramatta Leagues Club
- Rooty Hill RSL

Mercy Connect Ballarat also received a grant of \$4,630 from the United Way Ballarat Community Fund and the Ballarat Foundation to support the recruitment, training and capacity building of volunteers.

Many refugee children and young people have had disrupted or no education prior to arrival in Australia. Some have no literacy skills in their mother tongue and in addition may have complex mental health issues as a result of their past experiences.

We thank these clubs and organisations for their grants which will go a long way in ensuring these students will continue to receive the support they need to enable them to settle successfully in school. ■



## Help us for free

**F**OLO empowers people to transform an everyday practice into a small act of compassion. By simply downloading the browser extension, it lets you donate to Mercy Works at no cost every time you shop online. Established by a family philanthropic fund, The Pure Foundation, FOLO has secured the support of 700 major online retailers and launched a platform that automatically generates donations when you shop online, paid for by the retailers. It only takes 30 seconds to download FOLO on to your computer and every time you shop a small percentage of your spending will be donated to Mercy Works without costing you anything. A great way to help for free! Visit [www.folo.world](http://www.folo.world) to download or for more information. ■

**F**  **LO**

## Our newest team member

**V**anessa Yu has joined the

Mercy Works team in Lewisham as the Receptionist/Administrative Assistant for both Mercy Works and Mercy Connect Sydney. Vanessa has previously

worked in the finance, retail and hospitality industry. She recently finished her contract as Project Coordinator for St John NSW. Originally from sunny Queensland, she moved to Melbourne, where after 5 years she'd had enough of the weather and has now been living in Sydney for the past two years. She is happy to have found a place at Mercy Works and looks forward to contributing her skills to our organisation. ■



*Students in the Mercy Connect programs supported by the Clubs. Top and Centre: Phoenix College Ballarat; Bottom right: Bankstown Senior College; Bottom left: Mercy Works Sydney Coordinator, Judith Cahill with John Munch, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club Chair*



# AGENTS OF CHANGE





*Opposite page: A mother and her child, victims of domestic abuse meeting with the Assistant Coordinator of the Mercy Works Kiunga Program in Papua New Guinea.*  
*This page: Learning screen printing at the Home of Hope in Papua New Guinea.*

*Transformational change begins with empowering women. For this reason, many of Mercy Works' projects work hand-in-hand with local communities to improve gender equality and help break the cycle of poverty and violence.*

Women across the world are almost exclusively responsible for meeting the everyday needs of the family, yet they have limited access to the resources, information and freedom they need to fulfill this responsibility.

The data is alarming. Women make up half of the world's population but represent a staggering 70% of the world's poor. Two-thirds of the 774 million illiterate people in the world are female. There are 31 million girls of primary school age out of school. Of these, 17 million are expected to never attend school at all.

Goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals aims to promote gender equality however progress, particularly in impoverished communities, is slow as these women face gross inequalities from birth to death.

Studies have consistently proven that women are essential to ending poverty around the world. When women are educated and supported they become empowered. As a result, their families are healthier, their children are more likely to go to school, daughters are less likely to get married at an early age and pay gaps are narrowed. In strengthening women's roles as leaders, entrepreneurs and economic stakeholders, communities become more resilient and in time, our world will transform.

### Financial Independence

Our projects at Mercy Works both locally and abroad, have always had a focus on promoting gender equality both in the household and in society. Our training workshops in Goroka, Papua New Guinea provide the skills for women to run their own small market with goods they have made themselves. For many of the women, this is the first time they've earned their own income. One day, a participant came to class straight from the local bank and with tears in her eyes exclaimed that this is the first time in her life that she'd needed to open a bank account to deposit her earnings.

### Addressing sex and gender based violence

The magnitude of gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea is of epidemic proportions. Forty-one percent of men admit to having raped someone while over two-thirds of women are estimated to have suffered some form of physical or sexual based violence in their lifetime. The social, emotional and physical costs of this violence against women are colossal and further exacerbate gender disparity. Mercy Works is helping to combat this problem by running workshops in the villages along the Northern Fly River to raise awareness of the impact of violence and to give people skills for changing the way they express anger.

Closer to home, violence against Aboriginal women is also endemic. ▶

► If you are an Aboriginal woman you are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and 10 times more likely to be killed by someone who purports to love you compared to a non-Indigenous woman. A violent and turbulent home life can be one of the factors that lead to low levels of school attendance, retention and academic achievement. Similarly, poor parental engagement in a child's education can hinder their educational attainment and ongoing engagement in education.

The Mercy Works funded Community Engagement Program at the Pwakayini Preschool in Bathurst Island, 80kms north of Darwin, encourages mothers to attend pre-school with their children. We provide programs and resources to overcome the barriers that prevent them from engaging with their child's education. This includes promoting reading as a family activity as well as a nutrition program that gives parents and caregivers a chance to develop skills around preparing and sharing nutritious meals. Regular attendance by mothers leads to better parenting practices and increased self-confidence. Only when a woman feels confident and safe in her home and her community can she start to feel like she has the power to improve her life.

... women are essential to ending poverty around the world. When women are educated and supported they become empowered.



An Indigenous mother with her youngest child attends the Pwakayini Preschool in Bathurst Island as part of the Community Engagement Program



A Timorese pre-schooler at the Aidabasala preschool.

### Education is key

An old African proverb says, when “you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation”. Today, it is well established that investing in women’s education is imperative if we want to tackle global challenges whether it is extreme poverty or child mortality. We know that a girl with an extra year of education can earn up to 20 percent more as an adult. Additionally, the rise in women’s education prevented more than 4 million child deaths between 1970 and 2009.

Just as Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, demonstrated a deep sensitivity to people who were destitute and denied education, Mercy Works aims to improve the lives of people by providing greater access to education. Many of our projects focus on girls and women as they are most discriminated against, simply because they are female.

### Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, a country whose schools and education system were destroyed during its 24-year struggle for independence, education outcomes remain poor across the nation. Enrolment rates in primary school have recently improved but less than 50% of children who reach school age enrol in Grade 1, with a large majority of non-enrollees being girls. Furthermore, only an estimated 5% of children have access to basic pre-school education which is vital for building a strong foundation for future successful learning. For a number of years Mercy Works has been developing education programs in response to local needs and has established Early Childhood Learning Centres in remote villages in the





One of the locals attending skills training at the Home of Hope in Papua New Guinea.

Cova Lima District in south-west Timor-Leste. In addition to building seven pre-schools, we have been involved in the refurbishment, equipping and staffing of several more. We also help fund the salaries of the teachers as well as their ongoing training – nearly all of whom are young women from local villages who would have most likely otherwise been unemployed.

### Papua New Guinea

Girls and young women in Papua New Guinea, do not only have the geographical and cultural barriers that limit their chances of going to school but also face safety fears. Living in a remote village means the journey to school can be long and dangerous as girls are subject to the terrifying but very common threat of rape by gangs hiding in the bushes waiting to attack the unsuspecting female students as they walk to school and home. Mercy Works saw a real need to not only provide access to education but to also offer a safe accommodation option for the duration of their studies.

We have recently built a double-story dormitory for 100 girls at St Gabriel's Technical College in the Western Province of Kiunga as well as two more at Fatima Secondary School in Banz and the Maria Hilf Vocational Training Centre in Kainantu. We have also purchased school buses for the safe transport of students.

### Empowering Refugee Women

Women and girls make up around 50 per cent of the refugee and asylum seeker population but those who are unaccompanied, pregnant, single mothers, disabled or elderly are extremely vulnerable. On top of being

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forced to flee their homes, many must forego education and employment in order to care for children or younger siblings. They are also more likely to become victims of sexual violence.

Mercy Works has partnered with Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS) which aims to provide social and economic wellbeing by providing enhanced weekly English classes specifically for women from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds in this region of Queensland. As an additional means of support, childcare is provided by some of the project's 80 volunteers in order to enable mothers to attend the classes.

Our Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide also provides English lessons to Asylum Seekers living in the community and while the classes and other numerous services offered by the project are not exclusive to women, most of the attendees are female as their husbands are either working (due to recent legislation that allows them to engage in paid employment) or were persecuted and killed in their home countries. Their participation in our House of Welcome projects results in social participation and community connectedness as they settle in Australia. ■



# Nurturing education

*Mercy Works' Access to Education scholarship program in Papua New Guinea aims to support educational opportunities for students – particularly girls from remote regions – who would have otherwise not been able to pursue their tertiary studies.*

Joan Wagi, from the Jiwaka region of Mt Hagen in Papua New Guinea, has wanted to be a nurse for as long as she can recall. She vehemently denies that her mother, also a nurse, might have been the inspiration for this calling.

“My mother left my father, my 8 siblings and me to marry another man. I have no contact with her whatsoever and she is not the reason. I just like to help people. So many Papua New Guineans have health problems and there is a real need for nurses”.

What stood in Joan’s way from realising her dream was not Papua New Guinea’s cultural barriers where girls are discouraged or even forbidden from study. In fact, the opposite was true. Joan’s father, Mathias, a high school teacher, was very supportive of his eldest daughter’s dream – despite the fact that most girls in Joan’s position would be expected to stay home to take care of household chores and younger siblings –

**“I had prepared myself for a life of working in the garden, cooking and cleaning.”**

her youngest brother is just 5 years old.

With her parents’ blessing Joan enrolled in the Lae Unitech Nursing College, a nine-hour bus ride away.

Towards the end of her first year of studies, Joan received the devastating news that her mother had abandoned the family. Soon afterwards, her father lost his teaching position. With no family income to pay her tuition and boarding costs, 21-year old Joan was looking at dropping out of her nursing studies and returning to her village with her dream unfulfilled.

“I had prepared myself for a life of working in the garden, cooking and cleaning” she sadly recalls.

Shortly before the commencement of what would have been her second year of nursing studies, Joan was informed of a scholarship program run by Mercy Works. She was put in touch with Sr Agnes Murphy, the coordinator of the selection process for our Access to Education project, who was accepting applications from students who had the academic aptitude but lacked the funds to pursue their tertiary studies. If successful, her tuition fees, boarding expenses and travel fares for the holiday periods would be fully covered by Mercy Works, in addition to a monthly living allowance.

Soon after submitting her application, Joan received the exciting news that she had been accepted, along with 28 other students in remote villages of the Wewak and Mt Hagen districts – most of them girls.

“My father had been very worried and upset. He is so thankful now that I am able to complete my education” she happily exclaims. ▶

Data from 2012 shows that in Papua New Guinea, only 6.8% of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 14.1% of their male counterparts.



Mercy Works Scholarship Recipient Joan Wagt.

## Congratulations Saiqa

They say that true love and support comes from someone who stands beside you when you need them, is always in the background in case you fall, and gives you the space you need to grow as a person. Saiqa Ali, one of our regular clients at the Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide has found just that in her husband. Originally from Pakistan, a country where the status of women is traditionally one of systemic gender subordination, Saiqa has always had the unfailing support of her husband to pursue her dreams and realise her full potential.

The Ali family arrived in Australia three years ago and are currently living in the Adelaide suburb of Kilburn on a bridging visa while they await the outcome of their Temporary Protection Visa application. Not one to sit idly at home, Saiqa approached our Coordinators at the Mercy House of Welcome for assistance in applying to undertake the Australian Red Cross Certificate 3 in Aged Care. We helped with her application form and paid the enrolment fee. Despite her



Saiqa proudly displaying her Certificate in Aged Care Studies.

basic English, Saiqa excelled at both her studies and the work placement that followed, easily gaining her certificate. While she looks for work in the field, she is currently in the process of establishing her own part-time business preparing and selling Pakistani Street Food at community venues. ■

*“I am one of the lucky ones. Not only because of my Mercy Works scholarship but because my father was always supportive of my decision to become educated.”*

► With the second year of her degree almost over, Joan is already looking ahead to her third and final year – which will also be funded by Mercy Works. Once she graduates, she will be returning to her village to work in the local hospital.

“I am one of the lucky ones. Not only because of my Mercy Works scholarship but because my father was always supportive of my decision to become educated. My two older brothers are also students at the University of Papua New Guinea but that is normal for boys. They are educated because they are expected to work and bring money to the family. But many families abandon the girls and give all the rights

to the boys. It makes me so angry. Boys and girls have equal rights and parents need to take care of both equally. It is my right as a girl to be educated too. And when I get married and have children, I will make sure that my daughters also have the right. And hopefully, with more educated people around, these old customs will change and soon be forgotten”.

As Joan's voice rises emphatically on the subject of gender inequality in Papua New Guinea, it becomes apparent how passionate she is on the subject. It also becomes apparent what a worthwhile investment Mercy Works has made in Joan. As Queen Rania of Jordan once said, “Educate a girl and you change the future”. ■



Mercy House of Welcome Client working on printmaking. Inset: Claire and Miranda Harris

ADELAIDE

# Drawing strength

*The Art Bus is a mobile visual arts studio that brings art workshops to the community, including our Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide where lives are transformed through creative experience.*



“Have you noticed that not a lot of art is taught in schools anymore? And if it is, it’s limited to an A4 piece of paper and some coloured pencils. That’s why Miranda and I got involved with this” says Claire, the co-director of The Art Bus, a mobile art studio that brings art to various community organisations.

Claire and Miranda Harris come from a family of artists and grew up in the arts community of St Ives, Cornwall UK.

“We moved here as a family in 1971, when I was quite young. My experiences in coming to Australia as a migrant are vastly different from those we hear from the clients at the Mercy House of Welcome who were forced to flee their homes under traumatic circumstances, but nonetheless I feel a small connection with them.”

The Art Bus visits the Mercy House of Welcome every Tuesday and the number of participants can sometimes reach 30. The bus is equipped with a potter’s wheel, etching press and everything it needs to be able to go anywhere in the community including schools and aged care homes.

“There are more women than men in aged care and women tend to be more creative. They love our visits because not only does art offer an outlet for expression, but when we work with them, they feel valued,” remarks Claire.

“The same is true with the clients at the Mercy House of Welcome. There is an incredible amount of talent, particularly from the women who use it to explore emotions and ideas. Everyone’s story is different and sharing

their stories through art makes it a rewarding and empowering experience.

A lot of people think that you can walk up to a refugee and ask them to tell you about their life and where they come from. But it’s not that simple. Only when there is a relationship and a trust that you’ve developed over time will these people begin to talk to you”.

She goes on to describe a woman who catches two buses to come to the art workshops every week. Her husband, an academic in his former life who’d been jailed for 5 years and only recently released, is so traumatised by his experiences that he never leaves the house. His wife attends the workshop because it has now become her community. Through her art she is given the opportunity to create and contemplate.

“The coordinators of the House of Welcome, Meredyth and Emma are great with the clients,” says Claire. “They recently helped us coordinate an excursion to the Art Gallery of South Australia. When we were going back to the House of Welcome, one woman, a Hazara, came up to us and said ‘that was the most peaceful two hours I’ve had in the past five years. I will come back to this place.’”

The clients are currently working with ceramics and printmaking. Their work will be displayed at an exhibition entitled “Welcome House” at the University of South Australia’s Kerry Packer Civic Gallery (55 North Terrace, Adelaide) from November 9th to November 30th. The exhibition will feature ceramic sculptures, pots and objects, lino prints and photographs, all of which explore themes of identity and place. ■

Miranda Harris



## Bearing fruit

*Mercy Works continues to respond to ever growing needs with the expansion of activities in Australia and overseas.*

Thanks to your generous support Mercy Works is able to expand its assistance to those in need. Our projects in Papua New Guinea and the Mercy Connect projects in Australia, while continuing, adapt to changing needs. Our philosophy of engaging with the local people who tell us their needs means that each year there are different outcomes for these clients.

The injection of funds into educational projects in Papua New Guinea is beginning to bear fruit. Four new dormitories in three secondary schools are nearing completion. The purchase of buses for the students at St Gabriel's School Kiunga has meant that the girls can get to and from school safely. Twenty-nine students, recipients of scholarships, are completing their first year of tertiary study. Newly trained teachers in remote villages in the West Sepik area are being supported with the provision of resources through social media and street children in Port Moresby are being given access to informal education. All these initiatives will have long term benefits to these young Papua New Guineans.

After 12 years Sister Helen Nolen RSM is completing her ministry in Timor Leste. She is able to look back with satisfaction on the many achievements during her time there. Included are the early childhood centres which have been built in remote villages, teachers have been training, a network has been set up to support them and the children receive a nutritious meal each day. Helen has been working with the Fundacoa Sagrado Coracao de Jesus (FSCJ) in the Diocese of Maliana assisting them in the establishment of a solid education system. Mercy Works hopes to continue this

collaboration with FSCJ.

Now that the Government is granting temporary protection visas to asylum seekers, the needs at the Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide are changing. It is becoming more urgent to provide legal assistance to these people as they make their applications. If granted, they are moving into seasonal employment and if rejected need emotional support. The challenges for these people continue and the Mercy House of Welcome endeavours to assist them.

New projects in Papua New Guinea this year include the provision of safe drinking water along villages in the Sepik River and the building of housing for teachers in remote villages along the Fly River. In Australia, a project for Indigenous children, called Mercy Access, is beginning in the Shepparton area in Victoria. All in all, Mercy Works is continuing to respond to needs as they arise.

Thanks to our marketing and community education efforts we have been able to turn the previous year's financial loss into a modest surplus. We have been able to connect with a larger number of generous donors who have responded to our call. We are grateful for the support of our many friends and encourage you to continue with your support as we respond to ever growing needs. Without you our work will not continue.

Finally, I thank the Members, Directors staff and volunteers for your support. Your contributions are absolutely vital and very much appreciated.

**Berice Livermore RSM**  
*Chair of the Board*

# Our Projects

Across Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and Australia, we help support communities as they seek to achieve meaningful positive change. We respond to local needs, raising awareness and seeking to help the communities we work with.

## Timor-Leste

- Supporting early childhood learning through Montessori training
- Building new early childhood learning centres
- Upgrading facilities in pre-primary and primary schools

## Northern Territory

- Supporting staff and indigenous students at preschool, promoting nutrition, reading and social development



## Western Australia

- Helping students from a refugee/humanitarian background through Mercy Connect Perth



## South Australia

- Mercy House of Welcome: a space for asylum seekers to access support services and break down isolation

## New South Wales

- Helping students from a refugee/humanitarian background through Mercy Connect Sydney
- Building a gathering space and accommodation to help indigenous women return to the community after prison





## Papua New Guinea

### Kiunga

- Skills training to help women run their own small market
- Low cost child care where children learn motor skills, health and hygiene
- Promoting village health to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improve access to clean water and safe sanitation
- Addressing sex and gender based violence
- Establishing a sustainable Eaglewood plantation
- Sponsorships for further education
- Building school dormitories and providing buses
- Building infrastructure in Lower Bamu to support education (classrooms and teachers housing)



- Skills and life training (includes preventing domestic violence, health & anger management, training participants to develop small local markets, sewing, food processing and preservation)

### Port Moresby

- Training for Primary teachers in remote villages
- Street children's program
- Supporting basic skills development and training programs

### Wewak

- Financial support for young people to access tertiary education
- Remote teachers supported through the use of mobile technology
- Upgrading school dormitory
- Providing access to clean drinking water to two locations

### Goroka & Mt Hagen

- Drop in centres for information, referrals and support
- Helping rehabilitate prisoners
- Radio broadcasts to highlight human rights, social issues and spread information



## Queensland

- Supporting weekly English classes for women from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds in the Toowoomba Diocese



## Victoria

- Helping students from a refugee/ humanitarian background through our Mercy Connect programs in Melbourne and Ballarat
- Mercy Access: a volunteer program mentoring Indigenous students



# Mercy Works' people

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

## Our Company



**Barbara Bolster RSM**  
Institute Councillor

**Annette Schneider RSM**  
Institute Vicar

**Theresa Tina RSM**  
Institute Councillor

**Catherine Ryan RSM**  
Leader, Sisters of Mercy  
Parramatta

**Berneice Loch RSM**  
Institute Leader

**Sally Bradley RSM**  
Institute Councillor

**Loreto Conroy RSM**  
Leader, Sisters of Mercy  
North Sydney

**Catherine Reuter RSM**  
Leader, Sisters of Mercy  
Brisbane

OUR PEOPLE

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TO NOVEMBER 2015

**Mr Chris Townend**  
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FROM FEBRUARY 2016

**Mrs Mary Ellen Bland**  
TO NOVEMBER 2015

**Ms Christine Carolan**

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**Mr Gregory Smith**  
from November 2015

**Ms Sheena Barber**  
from November 2015

### Our Staff 1 JULY 2015 TO 30 JUNE 2016

**Sr Ailsa Mackinnon RSM**  
Executive Director

**Sr Gaye Lennon RSM** TO APRIL 2016  
Coordinator Offshore and Indigenous Projects

**Sr Anne Foale RSM** FROM MAY 2016  
Coordinator Offshore and Indigenous Projects

**Sr Lorraine Phelan RSM**  
Coordinator Domestic Asylum Seeker  
and Refugee Projects

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**Sr Gwenda Livermore RSM**  
Administrative Assistant

**Mrs Bernadette Jackson**  
Administrative Assistant

**Ms Julie Flynn** TO DECEMBER 2015  
Mercy Connect Sydney Coordinator

**Ms Judith Cahill** FROM DECEMBER 2015  
Mercy Connect Sydney Coordinator

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Mercy Connect Melbourne Coordinator

**Ms Thatathai Singa**  
Administrative Support Mercy Connect  
Melbourne

**Ms Paulene Barton**  
Mercy Connect Ballarat Coordinator



**Ms Jennifer Davies**  
Mercy Connect Perth Coordinator

**Ms Meredyth Taylor**  
Coordinator Mercy House of Welcome Adelaide

**Ms Emma Yengi**  
Assistant Coordinator Mercy House  
of Welcome Adelaide

**Antonio Favorito**  
Cleaner Mercy House of Welcome Adelaide



Income Statement			Statement of Changes in Equity				
For year ended 30 June 2016			For year ended 30 June 2016				
	2016	2015		Retained Earnings	Reserves	Other	Total
<b>Revenue</b>	\$	\$					
Donations and Gifts			<b>Balance as 1 July 2015</b>	<b>1,356,619</b>	-	-	<b>1,356,619</b>
▪ Monetary	4,705,872	1,105,867	Adjustment or changes in Equity	-	-	-	-
▪ Non Monetary	-	-	Items of other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Grants – Other Australian	73,115	20,933	Excess of revenue over expenses	58,484	-	-	58,484
Grants – Other Overseas	27,500	164,932	Other amounts transferred (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Bequests	-	62,939	<b>Balance as 30 June 2016</b>	<b>1,415,103</b>	-	-	<b>1,415,103</b>
Investment Income	49,189	47,946	<b>Table of Cash Movements</b>				
Other Income	411,328	327,633	For year ended 20 June 2016				
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>5,267,004</b>	<b>1,730,250</b>	Designated Purpose	Cash available at beginning of the year	Cash raised during the year	Cash disbursed during the year	Cash available at the end of the year
<b>Expenditure</b>	\$	\$	Papua New Guinea	964,890	3,630,877	4,084,992	510,775
<b>International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure</b>			East Timor	-	243,932	243,932	-
International Programs			Philippines	7,743	7,957	15,700	-
▪ Funds to International Programs	4,000,415	806,953	Domestic Projects	850	713,953	713,953	850
▪ Program Support Costs	83,729	77,788	Other Non Designated Purposes	783,077	854,472	1,287,590	349,959
▪ Community Education	20,208	11,362	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,756,560</b>	<b>5,451,191</b>	<b>6,346,167</b>	<b>861,584</b>
Fundraising Costs			<i>The income for our programmes comes from a wide variety of donors, including the Sisters of Mercy, associated ministries and other members of the public.</i>				
▪ Public	100,764	52,895	<i>During the year, specified donations have been received for Papua New Guinea, East Timor, the Philippines, Mercy Connect and other domestic projects</i>				
▪ Government, multilateral and private	-	-	A copy of the full audited financial report is available on request. Mercy Works is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, which defines minimum standards of governance, management, and accountability for non-government development organisations. Adherence to the Code is monitored by an independent Code of Conduct Committee elected from the NGO community. Our voluntary adherence to the Code of Conduct demonstrates our commitment to ethical practice and public accountability.				
▪ Accountability and Administration	237,613	84,915	The Summary Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct. For further information on the Code please refer to the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance Document available at ACFID:				
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure	4,442,729	1,033,912	Private Bag 3, Deakin ACT 2600 Tel (02) 6285 1816, Fax (02) 6285 1720, www.acfid.asn.au				
Domestic Program Expenditure (incl Monetary and Non Monetary)	765,791	723,633					
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>5,208,520</b>	<b>1,757,545</b>					
<b>Excess/(Shortfall) of Revenue Over Expenditure</b>	<b>58,484</b>	<b>(27,295)</b>	<b>Independent Auditor's Report</b>				
<i>No amounts of grants or donations from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), International Political or Religious Adherence Promotion programmes were received or paid during the year. There were also no non-monetary items to report during the year.</i>			<i>To the Directors of Mercy Works</i>				
<b>Statement of Financial Position</b>			<b>Scope</b>				
For year ended 30 June 2016			We have audited the summarised financial report of Mercy Works for the twelve months ended 30 June 2016 in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.				
2016			<b>Audit Opinion</b>				
2015			In our opinion, the information reported in the summarised financial report is consistent with the full financial reports from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report presented to the board on 19 October 2016. For a better understanding of the scope of our audit this report should be read in conjunction with our audit report on the full financial report.				
<b>Assets</b>	\$	\$	<b>Pitcher Partners</b>				
<b>Current Assets</b>			Level 22 MLC Centre, 19 Martin Place, Sydney NSW 2000				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	861,584	1,756,560	 <b>Spiro Tzannes Partner</b> Dated this 19 day of October 2016				
Trade and Other Receivables	37,157	661,920					
Other Financial Assets	1,126,980	-					
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>2,025,721</b>	<b>2,418,480</b>					
<b>Non Current Assets</b>							
Property, Plant and Equipment	9,219	4,473					
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>	<b>9,219</b>	<b>4,473</b>					
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,034,940</b>	<b>2,422,953</b>					
<b>Liabilities</b>	\$	\$					
<b>Current Liabilities</b>							
Trade and other payables	583,082	1,022,752					
Provisions	36,755	37,807					
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>619,837</b>	<b>1,060,559</b>					
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>							
Provisions	-	5,775					
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,775</b>					
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>619,837</b>	<b>1,066,334</b>					
Net Assets	1,415,103	1,356,619					
<b>Funds</b>	\$	\$					
Retained Earnings	1,415,103	1,356,619					
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,415,103</b>	<b>1,356,619</b>					

# So long...

*At the end of 2016, Mercy Works will be sadly farewelling two of our longest serving staff members who have been the backbone of some of our most major projects.*

## Time to smell the roses

"I'll now have time to cook," jokes Lorraine when she talks about what she'll be doing after she leaves Mercy Works at the end of the year. For the past 11 years, Sr Lorraine Phelan RSM has been tirelessly working with displaced people across numerous Mercy Works projects and locations. Most recently, she was the Coordinator for Domestic Projects - Asylum Seekers and Refugees establishing and overseeing all four Mercy Connect projects in Ballarat, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney as well as the Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide. She is also responsible for connecting with the Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support program and the Romero Centre Asylum Seeker Support Program – both of which receive Mercy Works funding and are based in Queensland.

When Lorraine first commenced with the Mercy Refugee Service in 2005, the program involved calling upon and training volunteers to provide support to refugee families upon their arrival. They assisted with their most basic needs such as helping their children enrol in school, showing them how to use public transport and accompanying them to government agencies such as Medicare and Centrelink. But as one of the most important tenets of Mercy Works is responding to people's needs, the program transformed into what is known today as Mercy Connect.

"There were other organisations that assisted with the resettlement of refugees here in Australia, however after spending one-on-one time with the families, it quickly became apparent that there was a major gap in helping students adjust to the Australian school system. Parents were panicking as their children struggled at school and eventually gave up, sometimes even refusing to attend. Schools and other organisations established homework clubs but they weren't working either due to a lack of understanding of

*"I visit each project at least two or three times a year and I love seeing the positive change in the people we help."*

homework tasks or lack of transport. The real need was in the classroom during lesson time," recalls Lorraine.

So in 2008 a pilot project named Mercy Connect Sydney was launched. The project involved training volunteers, most of whom were ex-teachers, to go into the classroom for the purpose of mentoring refugee students. It was a great success and quickly expanded to include three additional Mercy Connect programs across Australia. In 2013, Lorraine was a major player in establishing the Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide, a place where asylum seekers can come together to receive support such as English language lessons, pro bono legal assistance and support for any other needs that emerge.

"I visit each project at least two or three times a year and I love seeing the positive change in the people we help. The personal growth they've undergone is incredible. One of our clients at the House of Welcome proudly exclaimed to me one day that he no longer visits to receive support but to offer his assistance as a volunteer. And so many of the students we support in the Mercy Connect program have been able to go on to further education at TAFE and University because of the work our volunteers have done with them.

I have been working with refugees and asylum seekers for the past 27 years and have enjoyed it immensely. I'll miss Mercy Works and all the staff



on my team but it's time to hand over the reins to someone else and smell the roses."

## A homecoming for Helen

Many of the emails received from Sr Helen Nolen RSM, our Mercy Works Timor-Leste Coordinator, begin with "Apologies for the delay in getting back to you, we were without power for most of the day".

This has been the reality for Helen since she moved to Timor-Leste 12 years ago. As recently as 2013, the residents of the Maliana region where she is currently based only had access to electricity from 6pm to 6am. Even today, energy grids have not gone up across the whole country, while road infrastructure still has a lot of catching up to do.

Timor-Leste is a young nation with a violent history that includes centuries of colonial rule by Portugal, a bloody occupation by Japan during World War II and 24 years of brutal Indonesian rule. The violent rampage following the vote for freedom in 1999 left thousands dead and

Sr Helen with Timorese pre-schoolers.  
Inset: Sr Lorraine posing with a  
statue of Catherine McAuley,  
Sisters of Mercy foundress



hundreds of thousands terrorised and displaced. Seventeen years on from Independence, the country is still rebuilding itself.

Despite the challenges, Helen has always been drawn to Timor-Leste. As a young schoolteacher in Darwin, many of her students were Timorese. Some had arrived in Australia as refugees as they were part Chinese and therefore targeted by the Indonesians who persecuted mixed race individuals.

“My congregation in Ballarat has had a long association with Timor dating as far back as the 1970’s. I had previously lived in Timor as a volunteer for Australian Volunteers International helping to rebuild the country. In 2007 I became the Timor-Leste Coordinator for Mercy Works and one of our first projects was the installation of a water system in Fohorem. Since then, the focus has been on early-childhood education” recalls Helen.

At independence, many schools had been destroyed and there were severe shortages of teachers. Apart from an immediate challenge

in reconstructing essential infrastructure in order to ensure children could get to a school, training and recruitment of teachers was vital. Meanwhile, rapid population growth (45% of the population are under the age of 14) created additional pressure for the government to provide a quality education system for future generations.

“Even today, there aren’t enough classrooms and so primary schools only operate for 2 hours per day on a shift basis,” says Helen.

“The real challenge however was improving the early education sector, especially in remote places. Parents who had never been to pre-school themselves didn’t understand it. They didn’t appreciate the value and benefits of a

*“I take comfort from how much the education system has flourished as a result of the work I’ve been involved with.”*

pre-school education. This has improved today and the children just love coming to school. Primary school teachers often remark that they can tell apart the children who have come from one of our pre-schools which are today used as a model to be copied by others”.

During her 12 years as Mercy Works Timor-Leste Coordinator, Helen has overseen the construction of seven Mercy Works funded pre-schools and the renovation of several primary schools. She also supports teachers in education methodologies and facilitates capacity building training for educators and pre-school operators – major tasks made even harder when based in a developing country with limited access to resources.

“I’ve invested a large chunk of my life in this country and have mixed feelings about leaving. I take comfort from how much the education system has flourished as a result of the work I’ve been involved with but after more than a decade here, I feel ready to go” Helen says, the tinge of sadness as resounding as the voices of the preschoolers playing happily in the background. ■



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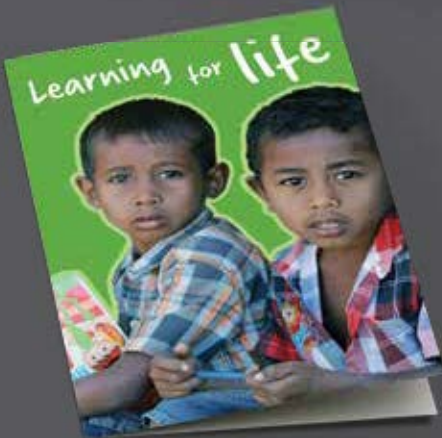
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