

mini MercyWorks Bilum

SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA | APRIL 2020



Welcome to the first of the Mini Bilum series – a departure

from the last 12 years when we have produced a glossy magazine every June. But in 2020 the world has changed, so in response, Mercy Works has changed the way we present The Bilum. You will receive a new short format version, Mini Bilum, regularly throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

May reading about how the lives of those in need are now filled with hope and changed for the better through our works of Mercy, bring more light into your world and brighten your day in these challenging times.

April 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Mercy Works. To celebrate this milestone, this issue presents a brief insight into our origins and evolution over 20 years in addition to reflections from some of those who have led Mercy Works on this journey.

Thank you for your continuing support in 2020 for our current projects that transform the lives of the poor and marginalised in communities across Australia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

Sally Bradley RSM
Executive Director

Shining Lamps for 20 years

Catherine McAuley asked her early Sisters to be “shining lamps giving light to all around us”. The Mercy Sisters have been true to their founder’s wishes through their ministry of Mercy in Australia to those in need ever since Ursula Frayne arrived from Ireland in 1846. So in essence, when Mercy Works came into being in the year 2000, it had ultimately evolved from 174 years of the works of Mercy in the Australian community as well as in many other countries beyond our shores.

By 1993, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia (ISMA) had identified the need for a separate entity from ISMA to fund the ministry work of the Sisters of Mercy in Papua New Guinea and Pakistan, as well as the Mercy Refugee Service (which had been started in 1984). So Sisters of Mercy Overseas Aid Inc was established. After several years of operation, ISMA’s National Projects Review Task Group recommended that development and partnerships, not aid, should be the Sisters of Mercy Overseas Aid’s primary function, and additionally it should include more domestic projects. In order to reflect this new shift in focus, on 7th April 2000, Sisters of Mercy Overseas Aid Inc. changed its name to Mercy Works Inc.

Patricia Pak Poy RSM was appointed the inaugural Chair of the Management Committee of the Incorporated Association. The Committee comprised 10 members who between them had vast experience of issues relating to human rights development and justice both in Australia and overseas. Together

they steered Mercy Works’ responsibilities for the Mercy Refugee Service and the Mercy Aboriginal Justice Network, as well as supporting overseas projects being conducted by Sisters of Mercy in Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. It was an auspicious start for the new organisation, made more so by the highly respected Lady Helen Deane, wife of then Governor-General Sir William Deane, accepting the invitation to become Patron.

A further development came in 2011 when Mercy Works became a Company Limited by Guarantee. This change in legal structure coincided with the formation of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia & Papua New Guinea. Mercy Works Ltd has become a unique ministry belonging to the four Mercy Congregations in Australia and Papua New Guinea (as the 4 Congregations did not come on as Members all at the start, since it was staggered with ISMAPNG being first, then Parramatta soon after, and North Sydney and Brisbane a bit later on).

Mercy Works has supported projects in 11 countries over the last 20 years, and this would not have been possible without the generosity of our thousands of donors during that time. The staff, volunteers and Board members who have served diligently and selflessly throughout the past two decades, have also been indispensable in effecting lasting change through those projects.

Mercy Works has answered Catherine’s call to action to be “shining lamps” for the vulnerable and marginalised, and may that continue for the next 20 years, and beyond. ■

Personal reflections shine a light on

HELEN NOLEN RSM

Executive Officer 2000-2003
Schools Support Scheme set up, which involved contacting every school in Australia founded by the Sisters of Mercy.

"Most of these schools no longer had any connection with the Sisters, but were keen to continue contact with their founding tradition. Their contributions, large and small, have sustained and continue to sustain, the spirit of Mercy Works in reaching out to support those in need".

MARY DENSLEY RSM

Board Chair 2004-2007
How the water project in Timor-Leste came about in 2007.

"It happened that Rosie [Carroll RSM, Executive Officer at the time] was asked for quite other reasons to give a reflection in her local church. So she talked about her visit to Fohorem, the difficulties under which the people were living, and said that she had been asked to tell her parish that the people of Fohorem parish asked her to tell their brothers and sisters in Australia that they needed help to get a consistent water supply. At the end of Mass a parish family [the Doughertys] came to Rosie

and said they would like to fund this work." The project came to fruition with the assistance of a member of the Rotary Club of Crows Nest who was a hydrologist. He had previously done work in Timor-Leste for AusAID, so he kindly made a trip to Fohorem to conduct vital work to the start off the project. He walked the nearby hills, using his GPS to map the route for the bamboo piping to bring water from the permanent spring at the top down to a tap in the village. The local people provided the labour and the donated funds paid for the materials needed". Mary commented, "What I find so striking in this story is that it illustrates so well that development work is collaborative and everyone has a part to play".

MARYANNE LOUGHRY RSM
Executive Officer 2004-2006
The extension of Mercy Works into PNG.

"The Sisters of Mercy had arrived in PNG in 1956 and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sisters' arrival celebrations were being prepared including a Mass at which all of the leaders of ISMA would attend. In 2005 in

anticipation of the anniversary I visited PNG and had discussions with Mariska Kua RSM, the then regional leader of the Sisters of Mercy in PNG. I also visited most of the communities in PNG consulting the Sisters and requesting their support for Mercy Works to be established in PNG. Back in Australia I invited Gaye Lennon RSM who had recently returned from Pakistan to consider working in PNG. Helen Baguley RSM, the Congregational leader of Gaye's congregation in Gunnedah, was very supportive as were the other Institute leaders. Maryanne Kolkia RSM joined Gaye, and Mercy Works with the support of the Bishop, commenced its work in Goroka in 2006".

MARY DUFFY RSM

Board Chair 2008-2011
Goroka women's prison visit, PNG.
"During a visit to Papua New Guinea, MaryAnn Kolkia RSM and Theresia Boyek RSM invited me to accompany them on their weekly visit to the women's prison, where they held discussion groups and assisted [the women] in various craft activities. The atmosphere that was engendered in this session

was extraordinary – a deep sense of gratitude and admiration from the women prisoners responding so delightfully to the compassion and skills of the Mercy women. I sensed that a partnership such as this was at the heart of Mercy Works and such memories often sustained me during those privileged years when I was Chair of the Mercy Works Board".

ROSIE CARROLL RSM

Executive Officer 2006-2012
How Mercy Works' involvement in the Western Province of PNG at Kiunga began in 2008.

A pilot project for villages along the Fly River was developed in partnership with Catholic Rural Health PNG. The project involved upskilling known traditional birth attendants and the training of new women identified by leaders in six refugee villages and two local villages. Moses and Rikai, the two trainers, taught the village attendants how to work with the pregnant mothers to ensure safer deliveries.

"During one of my visits to Kiunga I had the privilege of going on patrol with Maureen [Sexton RSM] and Moses. What an adventure along the Fly River in



the last 20 years

what was, I think, the Bishop's dinghy! But more particularly what an insight into the poverty of the people in these remote and forgotten villages along the banks of the Fly River. I watched and listened to Maureen as she compassionately related to these beautiful people and I have a strong memory of the women learning to accept Moses as one of the trainers. In one village Maureen needed to visit a 'birthing hut' with one of the village attendants. She simply embraced the attendant and the situation, but I found myself stepping back – confronted by the absolute poverty and yet simplicity of the space that was prepared for the next village mother to deliver her baby. Sacred experience indeed".

AILS A MACKINNON RSM
Executive Director 2012-2019
The impact of Mercy Works' projects on the beneficiaries
"Being with Mercy Works was a challenging and, at the same time, a fulfilling ministry. Knowing that we are working with the most vulnerable in our society brings an added dimension to the work. To

experience the expressions of gratitude from the recipients in the programs was most humbling. A simple gesture from Mercy Works means so much to those who have so little".

KATHLEEN DONNELLON
Board Chair since 2018

One of the reasons why she became a member of the Mercy Works Board

"I perceive Mercy Works as a practical and effective response to one of life's frustrating realities: the ongoing existence of bloated excess, alongside dire need. To reach out to those born on the other side of the privilege divide, is to walk in the humble but determined shoes of Catherine McAuley".

SALLY BRADLEY RSM
Executive Director since 2019
Visit to PNG in June 2019
"Despite the many challenges of community development work in PNG, the positive impact of Mercy Works' projects, which I have witnessed firsthand, is truly inspirational and stays with me constantly in this role". ■

PROJECT MILESTONES

There have been numerous projects supported by **Mercy Works** over the last 20 years. Here are some milestones for just a small number of those projects.

- **2000**
Inaugural Projects included Mercy Refugee Service, Mercy Aboriginal Justice Network, Pakistan & Peru
- **2004**
Support for the project in Forohem, Timor-Leste commences
- **2006**
Mercy Works Goroka, PNG is established
- **2007**
Mercy Works Mt. Hagen, PNG is established
- **2008**
Two programs are born: Classroom Connect (became Mercy Connect) in Sydney & Village Health in Kiunga PNG
- **2010**
Mercy Connect Melbourne commences
- **2012**
Support for Pakistan projects cease, while Mercy Connect begins in Ballarat
- **2013**
Mercy House of Welcome in Adelaide opens its doors
- **2014**
Mercy Connect Perth commences
- **2017**
Mercy Access begins in Shepparton
- **2019**
Timor-Leste project support shifts from Early Childhood Learning in Forohem to Nutrition in Maucatar
- **2020**
Mercy Connect commences in Bendigo, Mercy Works moves into Simbu, while Mercy Access and Mercy House of Welcome projects come to completion



Project locations over 20 years

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.



MANY OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUPPORTED 2000-2020

Australia

- Mercy Refugee Service
- Aboriginal Justice Network
- Community Links Project, Sydney & Wollongong
- Mercy Connect Program, Sydney, Melbourne, Ballarat, Perth, Bendigo
- Indigital Centre
- Mamre House Transition to Work Project, Sydney
- Tjanpi Aboriginal Baskets Project, WA, SA & NT
- Mercy House of Welcome, Adelaide
- Pwakyini Program, Bathurst Island
- Mercy Access Project, Shepparton
- Toowoomba Refugee & Migrant Support Project

- Indigenous Cultural Enrichment Program, Alice Springs

Kenya

- Vulnerable Children's Program, Lodwar

Pakistan

- Baldia Schools Program
- Notre Dame Institute of Education, Karachi
- Mughalabad Project, Rawalpindi

PNG

- Mercy Works PNG Project, Goroka & Mt Hagen (Life & Skills Training, Drop-in & Referral Centres, Mercy Markets, Highlands Radio Program, Awareness Raising,

Mercy Model Farm, Prisoner Skills Training & Repatriation Program)

- Kiunga Village Health Program
- Mercy Education Project, Wewak
- Access to Education Tertiary Scholarship Program
- Family Peace Project, Kiunga
- Mercy Secondary School Yarapos Building Projects
- Street Ministry Project, Port Moresby
- Catherine McAuley Childcare Centre, Kiunga
- Wewak Clean Water Project
- Maria Hilf Technical School Dormitory Project

- Ginigoada Youth Skills Training Program, Port Moresby
- Women's Wellness Program, Wewak
- La Sagesse Remote Girls Hostel, Kiunga

Peru

- Mother of Mercy Children's House, Cerro Candela
- Dental Health Care Program, Cerro Candela

Sudan

- Secondary School Dormitory & Hostel Building Project, Gidel
- Affirmative Action Program, Nuba Mountains

Timor-Leste

- Pre-school Building Projects, Fohorem
- Fohorem Water Project
- Feto Fitun Fohorem Young Women Training Program
- Maternal & Child Health Centre Building Project, Fohorem
- Early Childhood Learning Project, Maliana
- Maucatar Nutrition Project

DISASTER RELIEF

Indonesia

- Boxing Day 2004 Tsunami, Aceh

Philippines

- November 2013 Super Typhoon Yolanda, Leyte



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