



# Helping youth build a better future



## Salesian Missions NEWS 2021



### Farewell

Dear Friend of Salesian Missions,

After 25 years as Director of Salesian Missions Australia and having had my 78<sup>th</sup> birthday I have now moved into retirement.

It has been a great privilege for me to have been able to support Don Bosco's work in areas of great poverty, especially in a number of Asian and Pacific countries. This has enabled me to see the Australian Salesian Mission Overseas Aid Fund as a means of linking donors with those most in need and specifically to provide youth with a "skills based education".

Over the years I have met many of you and have been able to visit several overseas projects, especially in Timor Leste, Samoa, Fiji and India where we have been able to assist those most in need through the generosity of donors.

I introduce my successor, Ms Tina Newton as Director of Salesian Missions Australia. Tina has worked with Olga Elliott and I for the past ten years and I am grateful for her valuable contribution. It is with great confidence that I leave Tina and Olga to carry on our works to help our overseas partners care for the most vulnerable. In addition, Fr Peter Rankin, Vice Provincial, will be available to support any ministerial requests.

I am now living at the Don Bosco Centre in Brunswick, Victoria and will always have a fond interest and connection with the Missions.



Yours sincerely in St John Bosco

(Br) Michael Lynch  
June 2021

### Ethiopia - Civil Unrest

Due to the current civil unrest in many parts of the country, tens of thousands of displaced people have fled whilst the remaining population are forced to relocate to safer areas. The Salesians of Don Bosco have four centres in the region and are providing food and supplies to those in need including the blind and elderly.

'Since the war broke out on 4th November 2020, many people have lost their lives, lost properties, many are homeless and thousands of people have fled to escape the bombing and shooting. They have become refugees or internally displaced people within their own country. Rich and poor are at our gate every day, begging for food in order to survive.' explains Br Cesare Bullo.

The Missionaries of Charity Sisters, Salesian Sisters and Salesians of Don Bosco are working together to bake 2,200 to 2,600 loaves of bread every day for the displaced people.

Donations received were transferred recently to Br Bullo to provide a one-time distribution of 25kg of flour and 2ltrs of oil to 240 needy families. A further 60 families were assisted with food and support for school children for 4 months. On Br Bullo's May Request List he has indicated that further funds are required to distribute food parcels, which include dry yeast and multivitamin biscuits and to construct sheltered kitchens with cooking utensils for the displaced people.

Given the many problems and distressing situations they face, the Salesians and Salesian Sisters are continuing to help wherever possible.





# Greetings to all our readers.

I take this opportunity to introduce myself to you for the first time as Director. I have been honoured to accept this position and shall endeavour to continue the great work that Br Michael Lynch has done under his leadership.

Amongst the many challenges in the world today, Salesians continue to bring hope through their commitment to provide care and support to those in need. We are reminded of how precious life is and that we are all part of one family.

Our News Update includes highlights of some of the inspiring projects making a real difference: the distribution of food and hygiene packs throughout India during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing shelter and meals to over 3500 Timorese during the recent devastating floods and promoting equal opportunity by encouraging the vocational education of female students in Samoa.

We are thankful for Br Michael's constant encouragement and his enthusiastic dedication to making a difference to the lives of many underprivileged communities throughout the world.

On behalf of our Salesian partners, I would like to thank YOU for listening to the voices of those in need and despite your own uncertainties in today's world, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards



Tina Newton  
Director  
Salesian Missions Australia



## Timor Leste - After the Flood

On Easter Sunday, Dili, the capital of Timor Leste was devastated by Cyclone Seroja causing widespread floods and landslides which destroyed more than 500 homes. Intense rain and storms sent surging torrents of water through towns and villages turning the streets of Dili into canals. Roads and bridges were destroyed and many locals lost all their belongings.

Many Timorese fled back to their villages which are located on higher ground to escape the floods and this unfortunately, resulted in the transmission of Covid-19.

**The Don Bosco Technical Training Centre Comoro** was converted into a major relief/evacuation centre providing shelter and food for those who had lost their homes and possessions. The gymnasium and classrooms were used for emergency accommodation by more than 3500 displaced persons. The Salesian Sisters opened their doors to care for the most vulnerable, elderly, disabled, pregnant women and infants. The nearby Salesian Parish of Mary Help of Christians arranged food parcels for those who had been cut-off from access to supplies and who had lost all their belongings in the floods.

Currently, the Salesians continue to provide food parcels and supplies to those in need. A more permanent Displaced Persons Camp has been constructed within the Don Bosco Technical Schools grounds providing accommodation and meals for 265

people, 43 families. With Salesian Missions Australia's assistance it is planned that through the school's Vocational Educational and Training Course (VET), students will build modest homes for the most vulnerable.

In Laga Sr Cecilia reports, "most of the 105 girls have remained at the orphanage instead of returning home during the lockdown. The girls are all in good health and trying their best to keep up with their studies. We have introduced a number of activities including embroidery, singing, dancing, playing guitar and cooking which the girls are exploring with great enthusiasm."

Work has commenced on the replacement of a new ceiling and roof for the Don Bosco School and Agricultural School in Fuloro which provides an education for over 840 students. "After more than 40 years the roof requires extensive repairs as classes often stop due to leaking roofs during the rainy season" explains Fr Jose de Sa.







## Fiji

We are pleased to report that the construction of the Fiji Youth and Education Centre is now in the final stages of completion.

The contractors are in the process of finishing the toilet block, mezzanine level, kitchen facilities and external drainage. In recent months, in between lockdowns, it has been wonderful to see the hall being used for large social community gatherings and celebrations over Christmas and Easter. To ensure the sustainability of the hall, the Fijian Salesian Community have constructed a plan for the hall to be hired outside the youth outreach hours.

Stage two is to clear the surrounding land to build a netball/basketball/volleyball court and a rugby field where Fijian youth can enjoy time with their friends. This is an important part of the Youth and Community programs to encourage holistic development of young people. Br. Peter Minh Duc Nguyen explains, "In general, in many places in Fiji, the young don't have a safe place to play. Young people play rugby, volleyball, and other sports on the road and this is very dangerous. The need for a protected and healthy playground is an urgent need. The Youth program fulfils that demand and also helps them to develop the whole person by exploring different activities."



## Samoa

Since 1988, Don Bosco Technical College (DBTC) Alafua, Samoa is known for offering a quality skills-based education to disadvantaged youth.

They take pride in offering a second chance to students who have not completed mainstream schooling due to poverty, family and social issues. On completion of the 3 year trades course graduates are well placed to find decent jobs to assist their families and develop a fulfilling career.

After the successful transition to a co-educational school in 2020, DBTC currently has the largest number of enrolments for many years with over 40 girls and 180 first year students alone.

Ms Farene a second-year student is happy with her choice to specialise in plumbing, "I felt that plumbing is my calling. I want to get a job to help my family as they're not well off and I want to help them in any way I can." Ms Farene encourages young girls who want to become plumbers in the future "to go for it and don't hold back."



Don Bosco College and Vocational Technical Centre at Salelologa, Savai'i offers an accredited Certificate I in Trades Foundation Skills as part of their programme. The course is in its first year of implementation and upon completion the graduating students are ready to tackle challenges in the workforce. Students had the opportunity to showcase their products consisting of dressers, coffee tables, beds and cabinets to their families and community.

"It is with great joy and gladness that we have accomplished this part of the programme. We would like to thank those who sponsored this project, our Australian supporters. We are grateful that our students have accomplished and learned new skills and gained knowledge which was our goal," said Principal, Fr. Nukuluve.



## Myanmar - A Call for Peace

After three months the struggle for peace by the Myanmar people has only marginally improved with the international movement of effective solidarity continuing. The New Government of National Unity is slowly becoming more organized and visible both in Myanmar and abroad.

The Civil Disobedience movement is encouraging the people to protest against the military's coup, which continues to impact the call for peace.

Salesians in Myanmar indicate that they are trying to continue peacefully with their work and educational programs. Cardinal Charles Maung Bo has written to his people saying; "I believe that peace is the only way. There are always ways for expressing our protest in non-violent ways. The

current events are due to a sad lack of dialogue and communication where diverse views are disputed in violent ways. What has happened is painful and has shattered our people. I write with prayers and hope that this great nation and land of graceful people, will be a reconciled community of hope and peace"

Our Provincial Fr. Will Matthews asks that you pray for his fellow Burmese people, that the civil unrest comes to an end soon and the people of Myanmar find peace.





# India - 'Covid Warriors'

The current situation in India is both overwhelming and frightening. Despite this, Salesians are doing their utmost to help the most affected and vulnerable by collaborating with other Aid Agencies to provide a co-ordinated response.

In Bangalore and Mumbai food packages are being delivered to: Covid-19 patients who are treated at home, families who have lost their main income earner, migrant labourers and the marginalized of society. To minimise the spread of the virus fridges with food parcels have been placed on the roadside at central collection points for the needy. Covid-19 Care Centres have been established to assist those from the slums and where hygiene kits are being dispensed.

Volunteers including religious brothers and sisters are working in shifts in hospitals to assist where needed. These 'Covid Warriors' are trained by medical experts to assist the nurses and doctors, serve food and dispense medicine to Covid-19 patients in the general wards.

The Salesian Bangalore Rural Educational Development Society (BREADS) in partnership with other agencies have

initialised a "food to your doorstep" service free of cost for Covid-19 patients who are under quarantine. Education on the Covid-19 vaccination is provided and centres have been established in remote area to administer the vaccine.

Salesians in New Delhi, staff and volunteers have delivered groceries to over 700 families, with plans to reach 10,000 families in June. Financial assistance has been given to 200 displaced people to meet basic expenses including rent, with a further 500 to be assisted. Currently they are procuring oxygen tanks and beds for five charity hospitals who will provide free service to the needy as the lack of available treatment is the reason for so many deaths.

We receive updates daily on the many worthwhile works that are carried out by Don Bosco Salesians. It is encouraging that so many are offering their time and efforts to alleviate the suffering of those most in need. We are very grateful for the financial assistance we have received from Australian donors to enable this good work to continue.

Sadly, we have been informed many Priests, Brothers and staff have died from contracting Covid-19. Our prayers are assured for them and all of those affected.



# BEQUESTS

## Continue to make a difference

A bequest or legacy is a gift included in your Will. It is an act of generosity that can continue into future generations. By naming the Australian Salesian Mission Overseas Aid Fund (ASMOAF) as the beneficiary of a fixed cash amount or a percentage of the estate will ensure that the funds are dispersed to the project of your choice. For further information, please contact the Salesian Missions Office 03 9377 6060 or by e-mail [salmiss@salesians.org.au](mailto:salmiss@salesians.org.au) or our website for more information.

# ONLINE DONATIONS

Can be made through our secure website [www.salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au](http://www.salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au)

A tax-deductible receipt will be sent to your email address.

# BANK TRANSFER

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