the Bilum
Mercy Works
Sisters of Mercy in Australia & Papua New Guinea | DEC 2026



Women Bringing Women Together

Back to school in Port Moresby

Speaking up for disability rights in Timor-Leste

Mercy Works

SISTERS OF MERCY
AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Walking Together. Changing Lives.

OUR VISION

We partner with the most vulnerable to develop opportunity, dignity and self-reliance.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by Catherine McAuley's legacy, Mercy Works actively collaborates with local organisations to uplift vulnerable people, especially women and children, in Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste. Through hands-on programs that strengthen capacity, encourage self-reliance, and foster environmental sustainability, we drive meaningful, lasting change for those most in need.

OUR VALUES

Mutuality • Integrity
Compassion • Justice

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Mercy Works is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is committed to and fully adheres to the ACFID Code of Conduct. See www.acfid.asn.au

Cover
Left to right: Maryam Zahid of Afghan Women on the Move and Annette Cole of Amplify Black Women, with the new Powerhouse Parramatta in the background.

Cover photography
Felicia Simon, Luckie Fame Studios



THE BILUM

In Papua New Guinea, bilums are traditional handwoven bags used to carry precious and essential belongings. Our magazine takes its name from these bags, carrying stories from the people and communities connected through Mercy Works.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mercy Works acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connections to Country, culture and community.

A place to learn, a chance to dream

PORT MORESBY | PAPUA NEW GUINEA





When ten-year-old Daniel* arrives early at his learning centre in Port Moresby, he often volunteers to help clean the school. He also confidently helps lead morning assemblies. His teacher describes him as a bright student who enjoys learning and is always willing to help.

But Daniel's education has not been easy. He had reached Grade 2 at a local primary school when his family could no longer afford the bus fares, lunches and uniforms he needed to attend.

Across Port Moresby, many children spend their days on the streets, looking for food or ways to earn money to help their families survive. Poverty and the cost of schooling mean that, for many, an education is simply out of reach.

Today, Daniel is back in the classroom through the Archdiocesan Street Children Ministry, a Mercy Works partner.

For Daniel, having a teacher who is there every day makes a difference. He looks forward to attending classes, knowing his teacher will be there to help him learn something new.

The ministry operates two learning centres in Port Moresby, providing children who have missed out on formal schooling with lessons in reading, writing, mathematics and English. Children also receive meals, learning materials and other practical support.

The goal is to help children enter mainstream education and stay there. When children stop attending, the ministry reaches out, encouraging them to return and continue their education.

Daniel hopes to return to mainstream school in 2027. Until then, he continues attending classes, helping around the centre and showing the enthusiasm for learning that his teachers have come to know.

**Daniel is a pseudonym used to protect his identity. He is not pictured.*

PHOTOS: Left - Children take part in lessons at one of the Archdiocesan Street Children Ministry's learning centres in Port Moresby.

Right - Individual learning support helps children develop the skills and confidence to continue their education.



From the Executive Director

Dear friends,

At the heart of the life of Mercy is, as Catherine McAuley wrote, *"an ardent desire to be united to God and to serve the poor."* Over the past eight years as Executive Director of Mercy Works, I have had the privilege of living these words in ways that have profoundly shaped my life and deepened my experience of mercy and gratitude.

As I reflect on this journey, I am reminded of Catherine's words that the Sisters of Mercy should be *"the kindest people on earth, with the tenderest pity and compassion for the poor."* While Mercy Works accompanies communities at the margins, the experience has often taken me to the edges of my own heart. Through trust in Divine Providence and grace, I hope I have grown, at least a little, in the kindness and compassion that Catherine so valued.

One of the greatest gifts of this role has been the connections forged with ordinary yet extraordinary people across the communities where Mercy Works partners and serves.

In the Philippines, I heard the stories of women who survived human trafficking and found the strength to rebuild their lives. Many have since become powerful advocates, extending hope and support to others at risk of exploitation. Walking alongside them in the streets of Cebu City was a privilege, as they reached out to vulnerable women and girls, building trust and gently guiding them toward safety and healing.

In Timor-Leste, families proudly shared how fish, poultry and pig farming, alongside new water tanks, are improving nutrition, generating income and strengthening livelihoods. I was inspired by village health outreach initiatives and by women weaving beautiful traditional tais cloth, preserving cultural heritage while supporting their families.

In the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, I witnessed growing trust among women prisoners, prison staff and Mercy Works personnel through weekly life-skills and income-generation programs. I also saw the impact of water tanks in remote schools and clinics, where access to safe water is transforming daily life, often for a whole village.

Across Australia, I have been warmly welcomed by Indigenous communities, where we partner with local leaders to build trust and create opportunities that strengthen education and health outcomes. Their pride in culture, connection to Country, and dedication to family and community are deeply inspiring.

Through our asylum seeker and refugee programs, I have met many courageous people, especially women who are rebuilding their lives in search of safety, education and opportunity. I have also seen the generosity of Mercy Works Connect volunteers who walk alongside them, offering practical and educational support as they establish new lives and a sense of belonging.





These experiences have deepened my gratitude for the blessings many of us enjoy each day: clean water, safety, freedom, education, healthcare and the opportunity to live out our faith. Above all, they have reinforced my belief that genuine connection and mutually respectful relationships are at the heart of Mercy Works and the lasting change we seek to create.

My heart is filled with gratitude. Thank you to our generous donors, whose support makes our mission possible. Thank you to our dedicated staff, Board Directors, committee members, the Sisters of Mercy and the Leaders of our Mercy Congregations for your service and stewardship. I have also been privileged to work closely with two exceptional Board Chairs. Kathleen Donnellon and Joe Zabar have provided Mercy Works with wise, compassionate and steadfast leadership, for which I am deeply grateful.

To our partners, volunteers, supporters, Mercy tradition schools and all schools that support our work, and the many communities who have welcomed us with trust and friendship, thank you. You have shown me what it means to live mercy in today's world.



It has been an immense privilege to serve with Mercy Works. I leave with a grateful heart, inspired by all I have learned and confident that this vital mission will continue to flourish through the faith, generosity and connections that unite us, under the watchful eye of Catherine McAuley.

Every blessing to you and your loved ones for a healthy and peace-filled 2027.

With gratitude,
Sally Bradley rsm / Executive Director

PHOTOS: Left - Sally with students at the Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy, Melbourne following her presentation.

Top right - Sally with a local weaver in Maucatar, Timor-Leste, wearing a tais cloth gifted by women from the community.

Bottom right - Sally and Mercy Works' Head of Programs, Andrew Lowry, with women and staff at Barawagi Women's Prison in Simbu Province, Papua New Guinea.

Women Bringing **Women Together**



Maryam Zahid and Annette Cole come from different backgrounds, but share the experience of arriving in Australia as refugees and a belief in what women can achieve together.

Both have established organisations in Western Sydney, drawing on their own experiences to create opportunities for other women.

Through Afghan Women on the Move and Amplify Black Women, they are helping women build friendships, share knowledge and pursue their ambitions.

Mercy Works is proud to partner with both organisations.

MARYAM ZAHID

HELPING WOMEN FIND THEIR VOICE

When Maryam Zahid arrived in Australia from Afghanistan in 1999, one of the first things she noticed at the airport was women walking on their own. It was an early glimpse of a different life, but finding her own feet in a new country would take time.

In 2018, Maryam founded Afghan Women on the Move, driven by a desire to make life better for women in her community. She wanted to create a place where women could find friendship, practical support and opportunities to build more independent lives.

Maryam also wants Afghan women's stories to be heard, particularly those that can be difficult to share because of family or cultural expectations.

With support from Mercy Works, Afghan Women on the Move produced *My Mother and I: The Untold Stories of Afghan Women,* a documentary featuring 13 Afghan mothers and daughters reflecting on their lives and relationships.

Making the film required patience and trust. Some women worried about how their families might react to what they had shared. Maryam listened and respected requests to remove parts of their interviews.

"In getting to know these women, my role was not to explain them or speak for them. It was to listen. To witness. To sit with their stories."

Watch *My Mother and I: The Untold Stories of Afghan Women* by scanning the QR code.

Maryam's work continues through *Kitchen Connect – Cooking Stories,* a new initiative supported by Mercy Works. Refugee and migrant women will come together to cook, exchange stories, build friendships and develop digital and financial skills.



ANNETTE COLE

IT STARTED WITH A BRUNCH

In May 2024, Annette Cole invited a group of Black women to brunch in Sydney. She wanted them to talk openly about their experiences, the challenges they faced and what might make a difference.

As a young Black woman working as a lawyer in Australia, Annette had seen how easily women's contributions could be overlooked. She knew talented women who weren't getting the recognition or opportunities they deserved.

She contacted two friends, Lily and Anna, and asked them to help turn an idea into something more. Both said yes.

That was the beginning of Amplify Black Women.

Born in Sierra Leone, Annette arrived in Australia in 2000, aged three, with her mother and six siblings. She grew up surrounded by strong women, an experience that continues to influence her work.

Today, Amplify Black Women brings women together through events focused on financial literacy, professional development and wellbeing.

After attending ABW events, one woman began investing. Another opened a dedicated savings account. Small steps, but meaningful ones. Women have also formed friendships and business connections.

Annette has been struck by the generosity of volunteers who juggle careers, studies and families, yet continue giving their time to support others.

> *"Sometimes it begins with bringing women together, listening to one another and having the courage to act on what you've heard."*

Mercy Works began partnering with Amplify Black Women in 2026, supporting its programs and efforts to reach more women.

For Annette, the work reflects the African philosophy of Ubuntu, often expressed as "I am because we are."

PHOTO: Maryam Zahid (left), founder of Afghan Women on the Move, and Annette Cole, co-founder of Amplify Black Women.



Making room for change

DILI | TIMOR-LESTE

Every seat was taken when university student Augusto and his colleague Eva boarded a microlet, a local minibus, to travel to hospital.

Eva uses crutches. Augusto asked a passenger near the door to make space so she could get on and off more easily.

The passenger moved. Augusto drew the other passengers' attention to a sticker inside the microlet identifying priority seats for people with disabilities. The driver joined in, explaining that JDN, the police and transport authorities supported the initiative.

"I want my fellow colleagues with disabilities to be brave enough to speak up," Augusto says.

In Timor-Leste, young people with disabilities face discrimination and barriers to education, work and everyday services. Through Mercy Works' new partnership with Juventude ba Dezenvolvimentu Nasional (JDN), they are working together to address these barriers.

JDN is a youth-led organisation in Dili. With Mercy Works' support, young people with disabilities are developing a social enterprise where they can build skills and earn income by leading community education and advocacy.

Young people have formed four teams to work on the issues they want to change, from improving health and access to work and training to challenging discrimination and harassment. They have also begun gathering the stories of other young people with disabilities, so their experiences and ambitions help guide what happens next.

Recent activities supported by Mercy Works include workshops with health students at two universities on disability rights and accessible healthcare, as well as practical nutrition and hygiene activities.

At a July workshop, 20 young women with disabilities shared experiences of harassment and discussed how to respond.



"The workshop opened my mind to dare to take action when harassment occurs," participant Sandra said.

PHOTOS: Top left - University student Augusto speaks up for priority seating for people with disabilities on Dili's local minibuses.

Below right - Health students at UNPAZ university in Dili take part in a JDN workshop on disability rights and making healthcare more accessible.

Weaving a better future

MAUCATAR | TIMOR-LESTE





For Angelita, traditional tais weaving has become an important way to support her family and provide opportunities for her children.

Angelita, 42, lives with her husband and four children in Leogore, a rural community in southwestern Timor-Leste. Opportunities to earn a reliable income are limited, and her family has sometimes struggled to meet everyday expenses.

Before joining a local weaving group, Angelita had few opportunities to earn an income. Today, she is one of a group of women producing tais, the beautifully patterned textiles that are an important part of Timor-Leste's cultural heritage.

With support from a Mercy Works project, the women have been able to increase the income they receive from their weaving. Previously, Angelita earned around USD $20 for each tais. Today, she and her fellow weavers receive approximately USD $80 per piece.

The additional income is helping Angelita support her children's education, something that has become a source of pride for her.

When Mercy Works Head of Programs Andrew Lowry visited Maucatar in May, Angelita also spoke about how much she enjoys working alongside the other women. She values the friendships she has made and the opportunity to work together.

Mercy Works partners with the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy in Maucatar to support women and families through livelihood opportunities, skills training and community development programs.

Alongside weaving, the project supports activities including agriculture, livestock, sewing and catering. Village Savings and Loan groups also help families save money and access small loans to support their livelihoods.

For Angelita, being part of the weaving group has brought new opportunities to earn an income, spend time with other women and contribute to her family's future.

"I too am able to support my children's education." - Angelita

PHOTOS: Top - Angelita earns an income from tais weaving, helping support her four children's education.

Below - Women in Maucatar weave tais, creating opportunities to earn an income while keeping traditional skills alive.

Mercy Works **Connect**

Someone to listen

SYDNEY | AUSTRALIA



A student once gave Jim Beeston one of his favourite novels. He thought Jim would enjoy it.

As he handed over the book, the student was visibly moved, though trying not to show it. Jim was touched. They had been working together for nearly three years.

The student had arrived in Australia with some English and was adjusting to life in a new country, including an unfamiliar way of learning. He was willing to ask questions, though developing good study habits took longer. He had been spending late nights playing computer games instead of doing homework. With Jim's encouragement, he gradually learned to study more independently.

> *"He's given himself a chance to succeed from here on in his life," Jim says.*

A retired engineer, Jim has volunteered with Mercy Works Connect since February 2019. The program provides volunteer mentoring and learning support for people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

At a Sydney secondary school, Jim helps students with maths, English and assessments. Sometimes they look up an answer together; sometimes he checks with a teacher.

For Jim, trust is essential. Students need to know that correction is part of learning, not a judgement of their ability. He wants them to leave each session feeling they have learned something and can keep improving.

That means taking time to listen and understand where someone is struggling. As students become comfortable, conversations can reach beyond schoolwork to questions about their future. They decide how much they want to share.

Jim has learned how much listening and encouragement can mean to a student.

> *"You can just give them a little bit of a push along the way, and they just take it and run."*

In a letter to Jim, another former student he mentored recalled their Tuesday mornings in the school library. When the student felt discouraged by his grades, Jim reminded him that he was still getting used to a new curriculum. *"Your time, patience and encouragement made me feel supported,"* he wrote.

The student also had news to share. *"Sir I made it to University,"* he wrote.

In December 2026, Jim was recognised with an award from Mercy Works for his commitment and excellence in mentoring students, helping them build confidence and a sense of belonging.

More than words

BELMONT | AUSTRALIA



Every Monday morning at Belmont Library in Perth, people from different cultural backgrounds gather to practise speaking English. But the classes are also helping them make friends and feel part of their community.

"After coming to this class I have gained confidence in speaking English," said one participant.

Mercy Works Connect volunteer Glenys MacDonald knows how much that confidence can mean. A qualified English language teacher, Glenys joined the classes earlier this year after discovering how much she missed teaching in retirement.

She remembers one woman who was initially so hesitant to speak that her voice was barely audible. Over time, Glenys has watched her become more confident and come out of her shell.

The classes are part of Mercy Works Connect's broader work providing tutoring, mentoring and learning support to children and adults from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds, helping them build skills and confidence.

Glenys has also seen friendships develop beyond the classroom. Some participants meet for coffee after class, while others attend activities together at the library.

For Glenys, volunteering has brought the joy of teaching back into her life.

> *"They can come together for an English class and leave with a friend," she says.*

PHOTO: Mercy Works Connect volunteer Glenys MacDonald (standing) with participants in the English conversation classes at Belmont Library in Perth, WA.

Seeing the difference

For Revesby Workers' Club, supporting Mercy Works Connect is about helping young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds build a life in their new community.

The Club began supporting the program in 2023. On visits to an Intensive English class at Bankstown Senior College, where a Mercy Works Connect volunteer supports the teacher and students, Club director Christine Benham has seen students developing their English and confidence.

"As a community-driven club, we believe our role extends beyond our doors," Christine says. *"We're here to invest in people, create opportunities and help strengthen the communities we serve. Seeing these students grow in confidence, develop new skills and build connections reminds us that meaningful change happens when people feel supported and included."*

For Christine, the possibilities extend beyond the classroom.

"Our hope is that these young people feel a true sense of belonging, with the confidence to pursue education, find employment and actively participate in community life. Learning English is often the first step towards unlocking those opportunities which many of us take for granted."



PHOTO: Left to right – Revesby Workers' Club's Alysha Green, Mercy Works Connect volunteer Lorraine Manning, who supports students at Bankstown Intensive English Centre, and Club director Christine Benham.

OLMC PARRAMATTA

More than charity

PUTTING MERCY INTO ACTION



"We can't say we're Mercy unless we live Mercy." - Marg Marriott

For Marg Marriott, Director of Identity at Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) Parramatta, the partnership with Mercy Works helps students put the Mercy values both organisations share into practice.

"It's about working for justice, not just charity," she says.

Through school assemblies, Mercy Day activities and student-led initiatives, students learn about the communities Mercy Works supports, hear their stories and find ways to contribute.

For Year 11 student and Mercy Action Leader Manasvi, these experiences have changed her understanding of Mercy. Before coming to OLMC, she admits she didn't really know what it meant. Now, she sees it as something she will carry throughout her life.

To Manasvi, showing Mercy means "extending a hand out to someone in need", while seeing people without judgement or prejudice.



Fellow Year 11 student Amelia, the College's Liturgy Leader, remembers being told she was a "Mercy girl" when she started Year 7. But it wasn't until more recently that those words began to feel meaningful.

"Putting Mercy into action starts with one question: what does this community actually need?" she says.

Fellow Mercy Action Leader Juliana was moved by the story of Anna (not her real name), a young girl in Port Moresby whose family struggled to afford her education.

Hearing Anna's story made Juliana reflect on the education she enjoys and the responsibility young people have to stand up for justice.

Read more about Mercy Works' work with children in Port Moresby on page 3.

Marg believes these experiences help students understand that their contributions are about people, not simply fundraising.

She recalls how students responded when Mercy Works Executive Director Sr Sally Bradley RSM returned to the school with photographs showing how their support had helped women and children in the Philippines. Seeing the people behind the projects gave their efforts greater meaning.

For Marg, these experiences are part of continuing Catherine McAuley's vision, encouraging young women to stand alongside people experiencing poverty and marginalisation, particularly women and children.

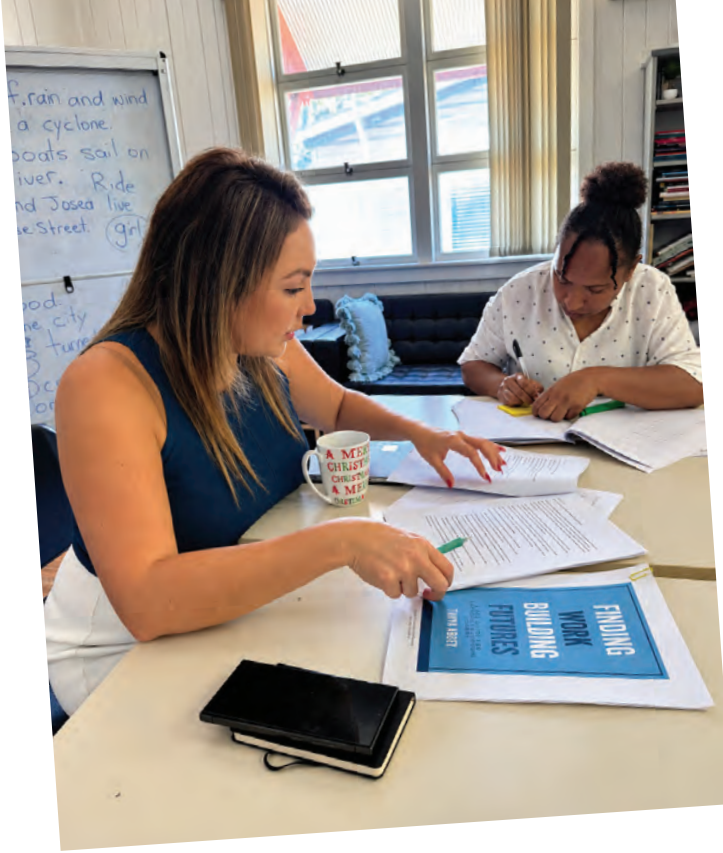
"We're trying to form Mercy women who are going to go out there and be courageous advocates," Marg says.

PHOTOS: Top - Marg Marriott encourages students to put Mercy values into action.

Below - OLMC students in the Girl Power Activated photo booth on Mercy Day.

A chance to begin again

BRISBANE | AUSTRALIA



Ruth* spent 17 years teaching children and adults in her home country of Papua New Guinea. She also helped refugees living there develop their English language skills. But when she arrived in Australia seeking safety from domestic violence, her experience counted for little in the Australian job market.

Without recognised qualifications or local work experience, Ruth struggled to find employment. At one point, she found herself without a roof over her head, sleeping outside a church in Brisbane before eventually finding crisis accommodation.

Things began to change when Ruth connected with the Romero Centre, which delivers the *Gateways to Employment* program in partnership with Mercy Works.

Recognising her teaching experience, staff offered Ruth a role as a bicultural worker, helping other people seeking asylum develop their English and literacy skills. While supporting others, Ruth continued working towards her own goal of returning to education.

Through Queensland's Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, she completed a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. She then secured employment at the childcare centre where she had undertaken her practical placement.

After nearly a year of support, Ruth was back doing the work she loved.

For Ruth, returning to work with children has brought something particularly meaningful.

"I find more comfort and enjoyment in my life while I work with children. It helps my mental health as I forget about the past." - Ruth

**Ruth's name has been changed to protect her identity. Ruth is not pictured.*

About Gateways to Employment

Alongside English classes, the program offers workshops where people seeking asylum can learn about workplace rights, build digital skills and prepare for a job. The program also offers paid bicultural roles to people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, giving them Australian work experience as they support other participants.

In 2025–26, two participants were offered jobs after a program visit to the L'Oréal warehouse in Redbank Plains.

56 people secured employment **through *Gateways to Employment* in 2025–26**

PHOTO: Tanya Abbey from RecruitCorp supports a participant during an employment workshop at the Romero Centre.

When the Storms Came Again

When Typhoon Uwan struck the Philippines in November 2025, Emma and her family sought refuge in a neighbour's home. The next morning, they returned to find their house destroyed.

Emma, 55, lives on a remote island in Catanduanes. With little income to spare, rebuilding seemed impossible. For months, the family lived in a makeshift shelter built from whatever materials they could salvage.

Through Mercy Works' partner, the Good Shepherd Sisters, Emma's family received assistance to rebuild their home.

It was the second consecutive year that devastating typhoons had struck communities where Mercy Works helps deliver livelihood programs. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the emergency appeal helped provide supplies to 533 families and housing assistance to 29 families.

For Emma, having a home again has lifted an enormous weight from her family's shoulders, bringing a sense of security they feared they had lost.





PHOTOS: Top - Emma outside the makeshift shelter where her family lived after the typhoon destroyed their home.

Below - Emma outside her family's rebuilt home, made possible with support from Mercy Works donors.

Growing confidence, healthier communities

NORTHERN TERRITORY | AUSTRALIA



For Dionica, a resident of Gunbalanya, a remote Aboriginal community in West Arnhem Land, working at the Remote Laundry has brought a first job and growing confidence.

"When I first started working here, I was a bit shy. But now I feel confident. I feel a bit strong."

Her experience is part of the change Mercy Works has supported through its partnership with the Aboriginal Investment Group. In FY2025–26, the Gunbalanya laundry completed more than 3,000 washing cycles and employed 10 local people.

Free commercial washers and dryers help families keep clothes and bedding clean. According to CSIRO's evaluation, the laundries help reduce scabies and skin infections, which can contribute to rheumatic heart disease and kidney disease.

This financial year, Mercy Works has extended its partnership to support the Borroloola Remote Laundry. Since opening in November 2025, it has completed more than 4,500 washing cycles and created employment for eight local staff.

Mercy Works' support helps keep the service free for local families. Staff also receive workplace health and safety, chemical handling and financial literacy training, building skills to work safely and understand their pay, superannuation and rights at work.

PHOTO: (L-R) Borroloola Remote Laundry workers Jaida and Bernice with Mercy Works' Andrew Lowry and Sally Bradley RSM outside the laundry.

Chair's Report



Twenty-five years ago, the Sisters of Mercy planted a seed. They created Mercy Works as a practical expression of Catherine McAuley's charism: to walk alongside the poorest and most marginalised and make a real difference in their lives.

In 2025 we celebrated that quarter century. We gave thanks for the Sisters, our partners, donors, staff and volunteers, and the many thousands of lives touched across Australia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Philippines.

But anniversaries are not only for looking back.

On 24 September 2027, the Mercy family around the world will mark 200 years since Catherine McAuley opened the House of Mercy on Baggot Street in Dublin. Two centuries on, her challenge is as urgent as the day she opened that door.

And the need has rarely been greater.

Global uncertainty is touching every household. Conflict, rising costs, climate disasters and shrinking aid budgets dominate the headlines. For most of us, this means tightening our belts. For families living hand to mouth, it means choosing between food and medicine, between school fees and rent. It is a child on the streets of Port Moresby hoping for a meal and a place in a classroom, a young girl selling souvenirs on a Philippine beach when she should be at school, a refugee family in Western Sydney starting again with nothing. Those with the least are always hit first and hardest.

We cannot look away. Nor will we.

As we approach the bicentenary, Mercy Works has set itself an ambitious goal: to connect with every Australian Mercy tradition school and every Mercy institution.

Imagine what is possible. Across the Mercy family are tens of thousands of students, teachers, staff, doctors, nurses, carers and community workers. Each carries Catherine's spirit in their own way. Together, we are a formidable force for good. If we can marshal that collective goodwill, even in small and simple ways, we can change lives here at home and among our neighbours overseas.

Of course, governments must do more. But so too can we. Because if not us, then who?

Let me be clear about how we will meet this challenge. We will not chase size for its own sake. Mercy Works will remain what it has always been: small, nimble and focused. We will stay close to our partners and the communities we serve, supporting practical programs that make a lasting difference. That means livelihoods and clean water in PNG, maternal health and nutrition in Timor-Leste, healing for survivors of violence and trafficking in the Philippines, and walking with First Nations communities and refugees here in Australia.

That is who we are: the Church's quiet achievers, doing good with conviction and tenacity.

I thank the Sisters of Mercy for their enduring trust; our donors, schools, health and community partners for their generosity; our staff and volunteers for their dedication; and my fellow Board members for their wisdom and support.

Our first 25 years were a gift. The next chapter asks more of all of us. We are ready.

"The poor need help today, not next week." – *Catherine McAuley*

Joe Zabar / Board Chair

Key Project Outcomes

Throughout FY2026, Mercy Works worked alongside local partners and communities across Australia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Philippines to expand opportunities in education, healthcare and livelihoods, and improve access to clean water. Here are some of the year's achievements.

Overseas Projects

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Children and Education – Port Moresby

In the first year of Mercy Works' partnership with the Archdiocese of Port Moresby, 100 children (46 girls and 54 boys) completed the equivalent of a school year through the mission's education program. Many come from families who have migrated to the city in search of a better life but cannot access formal schooling. The program provides meals, care and lessons in literacy, numeracy and English to prepare children for school enrolment. Mercy Works also supported school fees, uniforms and the construction of a toilet block.

Daru-Kiunga Livelihoods Program – Western Province

Following monitoring visits and discussions with the local team, Mercy Works concluded that the project was not achieving its intended outcomes and ended its partnership with the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga. Before the partnership ended, Mercy Works funded 12 rainwater tanks to collect and store water in the Kiunga area.

Kundiawa Partnership – Simbu Province

Mercy Works established a new partnership with the Diocese of Kundiawa, moving from a locally staffed operation to working through the Diocese. Fourteen rural primary schools received rainwater tanks and plumbing, providing access to safer water in communities where contaminated water poses serious health risks. The improvements benefited more than 3,000 children, as well as teachers and surrounding communities. Women in prison also participated in rehabilitation activities, including cooking and sewing.

PHILIPPINES

Emergency Response – Tropical Cyclones, Philippines

Following Tropical Cyclones Kalmaegi (Tino) and Fung-wong (Uwan), Mercy Works worked with the Good Shepherd Sisters to support families in Cebu and on Panay Island, Catanduanes. Emergency relief reached 533 families (1,940 people). Housing assistance reached 29 families, including 10 in Cebu and 19 on Panay Island.

Healing and Empowerment of Women and Children – Legazpi City

Through SMEIDFI and Good Shepherd Home, Legazpi, 45 women and girls affected by gender-based violence received support, including eight in residential care and 17 living with family or guardians. Eight new livelihood groups brought together 50 participants across five communities, while 35 fisherfolk received equipment, including nets and boats. Financial management and leadership training supported 40 participants. Gender-based violence awareness activities reached 700 people, and 22 community advocates received training.

PROTECT Project – Moalboal, Cebu

Launched in FY2026 by SMEIDFI through VMGSSI, PROTECT supports vulnerable children selling souvenirs in Moalboal's nightlife area, helping them and their families understand the risks and explore alternative ways to earn an income. The project reached 694 people with information about human trafficking and prostitution, 260 on gender-based violence, and 49 on children's rights and child labour. Sixteen families were identified for further assistance.

TIMOR-LESTE

Emergency Response – Ila Village, Maucatar

Landslides on 31 May and 1 June 2026 damaged 55 homes and destroyed another 21 in the Maucatar area. Responding to a request from the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Works provided emergency funding to assist 43 of the worst-affected families with food, shelter materials and cooking supplies.

Health, Livelihoods and Women's Empowerment – Maucatar

More than 9,000 people benefited from health, education and livelihoods activities delivered with the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy. Mobile clinics visited 22 remote villages, and health education was delivered in 14 schools. Two schools serving 1,499 children received water tanks. Three new savings and loans groups involved approximately 30 women, while 534 people received training in IT, catering and English.

Australian Projects

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Mt Druitt, NSW

The Mums and Bubs program supported 81 mothers and children, providing a welcoming space for women to connect, share experiences and strengthen family and cultural ties. Activities included weaving, art and cultural activities for children, alongside woodworking classes that led to TAFE Statements of Attainment. Guest speakers also provided information on domestic violence and community services.

Kura Yerlo – Youth Connection to Country Camp, SA

Eight young people participated in a culturally safe On Country camp in March, strengthening their connections to culture, Country and community.

Nallei Jerring Leadership Program – Western Victoria

The program, delivered with the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation, supported 98 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from 15 secondary schools to strengthen their cultural identity, leadership and community connections. Six workshops were held across Ballarat and Melbourne's Inner West. All participants reported greater confidence in connecting with their community and stronger cultural knowledge.

Remote Laundries – Gunbalanya, NT

Supported in partnership with Aboriginal Investment Group, the Gunbalanya laundry completed 3,096 washing cycles in FY2026, providing free laundry facilities to help reduce the spread of scabies through clothing and bedding. The project has employed 10 local staff, with two employees completing more than 18 months of employment and maintaining 100% attendance.

Tjungu Wattyjarra (Family Together) – Adelaide, SA

The program, delivered with Aboriginal Berean Community Church Inc., supported 53 participants, providing advocacy and practical assistance to Aboriginal women in prison and following release, helping them reconnect with family, community and culture. A resource booklet was also developed to support Aboriginal families at risk of child protection intervention and children being placed with non-Aboriginal families.

REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER COMMUNITIES

Gateways to Employment – Romero Centre, Brisbane, QLD

The program supported 398 people seeking asylum through employment training and confidence-building activities, with 56 securing jobs. Fourteen employment readiness workshops recorded 159 attendances, while 48 participants attended 159 English classes. Training covered financial and digital literacy, workplace rights and job preparation. Four worksite visits and employer engagement activities also helped four people secure employment.

Know Your Rights – Sydney, NSW

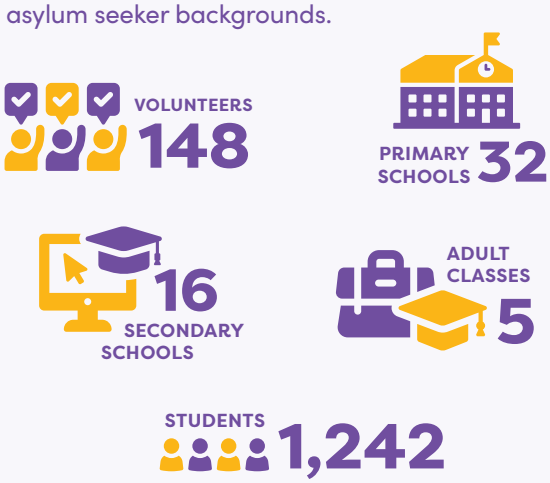
In partnership with global law firm DLA Piper, the program delivered four legal education workshops for newly arrived refugees. Thirty-eight people registered, with an average of 24 attending each session. Covering tenancy rights, Australia's legal system, starting a business and human rights, the workshops helped participants better understand their rights and responsibilities and build confidence to advocate for themselves.

My Mother and I – Afghan Women on the Move, NSW

The documentary *My Mother and I: The Untold Stories of Afghan Women,* sharing the voices and experiences of Afghan mothers and daughters living in Australia, was launched at NSW Parliament House in March 2026. A companion booklet captured additional personal stories and reflections. Together with community screenings, including an event in Blacktown attended by more than 100 people, the initiative reached 360 people.

Mercy Works Connect – NSW, VIC and WA

Provides tailored learning and mentoring support for school students and adults from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.



In NSW, our **MPower mentoring program** supports 15 first-year tertiary students across six educational campuses.

Reading Angels continues at St Agnes Catholic College, with 30 student volunteers helping younger students develop their literacy skills.

Financial Statements

INCOME STATEMENT

For year ended 30 June 2026

Revenue	2026 $	2025 $
Monetary Donations and Gifts		
- From Members	480,000	463,647
- From Other Parties	1,590,474	1,251,827
Grants - Other Australian	79,000	110,490
Grants - Other International	26,787	26,787
Bequests	7,000	7,995
Other Income		
Interest Received	80,642	143,505
Distribution Received from Investments	272,533	106,446
Gain on Revaluation of Investments	-	33,501
Total Revenue	**2,536,436**	**2,144,198**

Expenditure	$	$
International Aid & Development Programs Expenditure		
International Programs		
- Funds to International Programs	596,864	516,103
- Program Support Costs	139,834	91,211
Community Education	61,080	55,368
Public Fundraising Costs	103,584	80,316
Accountability and Administration	200,084	255,436
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure	1,101,446	998,434
Domestic Program Expenditure (incl Monetary and Non Monetary)	834,950	749,220
Loss on Revaluation of Investments	138,321	-
Total Expenditure	2,074,717	1,747,654
Excess of Revenue Over Expenditure	461,719	396,544

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2026

Assets	2026 $	2025 $
Current Assets		
- Cash and Cash Equivalent	502,839	523,714
- Trade and Other Receivables	16,051	5,919
- Financial Assets	530,898	3,114,701
- Other Assets	33,510	19,592
Total Current Assets	1,083,298	3,663,927
Non Current Assets		
- Financial Assets	4,695,881	1,699,743
- Property, Plant and Equipment	21,745	14,327
Total Non Current Assets	4,717,626	1,714,069
Total Assets	5,800,924	5,377,996

Liabilities	$	$
Current Liabilities		
- Trade and Other Payables	36,984	61,242
- Employee Benefits	64,821	74,010
- Other Liabilities	44,114	59,301
Total Current Liabilities	145,919	194,554
Non Current Liabilities		
Employee Benefits	35,901	26,057
Total Non Current Liabilities	35,901	26,057
Total Liabilities	181,820	220,611
Net Assets	5,619,104	5,157,385

Equity	$	$
Retained Surplus	5,619,104	5,157,385
Total Equity	5,619,104	5,157,385

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For year ended 30 June 2026

	Retained Earnings	Reserves	Other
Balance as 1 July 2025	5,157,385	-	-
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	461,719	-	-
Balance as 30 June 2026	5,619,104	-	-

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

Obligations for projects carried forward to FY27 are adequately covered by cash and cash equivalents. These funds have been directed towards the retained earnings and will be used to fund future projects.

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

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, accounting standards, provide a true and fair view of their financial position and performance, and that the organisation can pay its debts as and when they become due. These financial statements have been reviewed and approved by the Board. The full statutory financial statements separately from the Annual Report is available on: https://mercyworks.org.au/who-we-are/annual-reports-financial-statements/

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

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2026, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial report of Mercy Works Limited for the year ended 30 June 2026.

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that special purpose financial report in our report dated 5 November 2026. That financial report, and the summary financial statements, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on that financial report.

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

The Responsibility of the Board Members for the Summary Financial Report

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

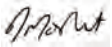
Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of Mercy Works Limited for the year ended 30 June 2026 are consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report.

NOT FOR PROFIT ACCOUNTING SPECIALISTS
KESWICK SA 5035



Ian Mostert CPA
Registered Company Auditor No 539768

Dated: 10 November 2026

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
AUSTRALIA + NEW ZEALAND

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Who We Are

Thank you to our Members, Board, standing committee members and staff for the time, care and expertise they bring to Mercy Works. Each contributes to our work alongside communities in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

OUR BOARD



Joseph Zabar
Board Chair /
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Member



Michael Cuzic
Board Member /
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Chair



Francis Elvey
Board Member /
Program Committee Chair



Andrew Burke
Board Member /
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Member



Steven Collins
Board Member /
Program Committee Member



Catherine Glenister
Board Member /
Program Committee Member



Jenny Howard
Board Member /
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Member



Berneice Loch rsm
Board Member



Fiona McKenzie
Board Member /
Finance, Risk and Audit Committee Member



Margaret Scroope rsm
Board Member



Kerrie Walshaw
Board Member /
Program Committee Member

OUR MEMBERS

Karon Donnellon rsm
Leader, ISMAPNG

Elizabeth Moloney rsm
Institute Vicar, ISMAPNG

Duyen Thi My Nguyen rsm
Institute Councillor, ISMAPNG

Theresia Tina rsm
Institute Councillor, ISMAPNG

Margaret Madden rsm
Institute Councillor, ISMAPNG

Peta Goldburg rsm
Leader, Sisters of Mercy Brisbane

Margaret Jones rsm
Leader, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta

OUR STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Board Directors' committee roles are listed under Our Board.

Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Chris Bisset
Peter Brown
John McIntosh
Patricia Monemvasitis

Program Committee

Rebecca Bromhead
Bernard Dobson
Jim Hanna
Renae Lowry

OUR STAFF

Sally Bradley rsm
Executive Director

Martin Binoj
Company Secretary / Finance Manager

Katherine Cooney
Mercy Works Connect Coordinator – VIC

Danielle Hayes
Fundraising and Marketing Manager

Nancy Hourani
Mercy Works Connect Coordinator – WA

Kim Lee
Project Manager

Andrew Lowry
Head of Programs

Sandra Marreiros
Finance and Administration Officer

Katrina Richardson
Grants Coordinator

Paul Taylor
Mercy Works Connect Coordinator – NSW

Thank you

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION

To the students, teachers, staff, parents and friends in school communities across Australia — **thank you** for your compassion and generosity.

The time, effort and care you put into fundraising help people experiencing poverty and disadvantage access education, improve their health and increase their income. Your support reaches communities in Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

The following schools donated funds between November 2025 and October 2026.

Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy
All Hallows' School, Brisbane
Aranmore Catholic College, Leederville
Bunbury Catholic College
Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Bathurst
The Cathedral College, Rockhampton
Catherine McAuley College, Bendigo
Catherine McAuley Westmead
Emmanuel College, Warrnambool
Holy Cross College, Ellenbrook
Loreto College, Ballarat
Marymede Catholic College, South Morang
McAuley Catholic College, Grafton
Mercedes College, Perth
Mercedes College, Springfield
Mercy Catholic College, Chatswood
Mercy College, Koondoola
Merici College, Canberra
Methodist Ladies' College, Perth
Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale
Notre Dame College, Shepparton
Our Lady Help of Christians School, Earlville
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Baulkham Hills South
Our Lady of Lourdes School, Nollamara
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College, Burraneer
Our Lady of Mercy College, Australind
Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg
Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta
Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School, Kellyville
Padbury Catholic School, Padbury
Sacred Heart Central School, Cootamundra
Sacred Heart College, Geelong
Sacred Heart College, Kyneton
Santa Maria College, Attadale
St. Aloysius College, Adelaide
St. Aloysius College, North Melbourne
St. Anne's Catholic Primary School, Harvey
St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School, North Rockhampton
St. Anthony's Primary School, Girraween
St. Brigid's College, Lesmurdie
St. Columba's Catholic School, Bayswater
St. Columba's Primary School, Adamstown
St. Denis School, Joondanna
St. Francis Xavier Primary School, Ballarat East
St. Gerard's Primary School, Westminster
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, North Mackay
St. Joseph's College, Mildura
St. Luke's Catholic Primary School, Woodvale
St. Mary's Primary School, Rydalmere
St. Mary's School, Mackay
St. Michael's Primary School, Baulkham Hills
St. Michael's Primary School, Meadowbank
St. Michael's School, Gordonvale
St. Monica's College, Cairns
St. Monica's Primary School, North Parramatta
St. Patrick's College, Mackay
St. Patrick's Primary School, Parramatta
St. Raphael's School, Parkside
St. Stephen's School, Duncraig
Ursula Frayne Catholic College, Victoria Park





TOGETHER, WE CAN OPEN DOORS

A chance to earn an income. Support to return to school. Access to clean water and better health.

The stories in this Bilum show what can happen when people have the opportunities and support they need.

Your gift to Mercy Works can help women, children and communities in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Philippines build on their strengths and work towards a more secure future.

Please give today and help create more opportunities.
Donate at **mercyworks.org.au/donate,** scan the QR code or complete the form on the reverse.

Scan to donate online

Mercy Works
SISTERS OF MERCY
AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Walking Together. Changing Lives.

PHOTO: Thadalena da Costa (left) and Junita Gusmão with eggs for a nutritious lunch at a Mercy Works-supported health clinic in Timor-Leste. The meal also demonstrated healthy food choices for growing children.

I want to donate!

☑ Yes, I will help women and families build a better future.

I'd like to give:

☐ **$50** ☐ **$100** ☐ **$200** ☐ **$500** **or** $ _____

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

I'd like to...

☐ Become a Friend of Mercy Works *($50 annually)*

☐ Renew my Friends donation *($50 annually)*

Total donation: $_____

Include any Friends donation in this total.

My payment details

Please find enclosed: ☐ Cheque ☐ Money order *(payable to Mercy Works Ltd)*

Please debit this card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry date: ☐☐ / ☐☐

Name on card:
Signature:

or make a bank transfer: Bank: Westpac BSB: 032 060 Acct: 372339
Acct Name: Mercy Works Limited.
Include BILUM26 & your name in the payment reference.

My Contact Details *(Please Print)*

First Name:	Surname:
Postal address:	
	Suburb:
State:	Postcode:
Phone:	Email:

☐ I would like my receipt sent to my email address.

☐ I would like to receive information about remembering Mercy Works in my will.

Completed forms can be mailed to:

Mercy Works Ltd • PO Box 2023 North Parramatta NSW 1750
Contact us at: **mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au** or +61 (0)2 9564 1911

REGISTERED CHARITY

ACFID MEMBER

Scan to donate online

To read our privacy policy, please visit **www.mercyworks.org.au**