

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

HEALING THE LAND, HEALING OURSELVES, TOGETHER

NEWSLETTER



**Highways
and Byways**

HEALING THE LAND.
HEALING OURSELVES.
TOGETHER.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

JANE COLLOPY

Welcome to Winter!

With your generous support we've been able to launch our wonderful Small Grants Program for 2023 and continue our partnership programs in Tasmania and Queensland. Todd's team have been working hard through the colder weather to restore the land in the Break O'Day region of North East Tasmania, and Tani has made great progress in establishing long term structures that can support the *Free2b Time* one on one support for teenage girls in St Helens and St Marys.

I'm excited to share that Megan Brown who runs our *Seeds of Connection* program in Roma, Queensland, will now be an employee of Highways and Byways. At such an important moment in time with the upcoming Referendum on the Voice to Parliament, its wonderful to have such a strong and talented Mithaka and Gunggari woman join our team!

Earlier in the year, Megan developed a *Healing and Belonging Through Culture* camp for Indigenous women, and welcomed 36 women to participate at the Yumba in Mitchell, Queensland. Yumba is the Gunggari word for camp, and this land is very special to those with ties to the Gunggari, Bidgara, Kooma, Kamilaroi and Mandandanji peoples who lived there harmoniously until they were forcibly removed in 1968.

Women travelled from across southern Queensland to the Yumba, to reconnect to Country. For many, this was the first time they met other women who have ties to this land. Megan reflected how incredible it was to see these women develop genuine, meaningful relationships over such a short period of time. They expressed deep gratitude to Megan's leadership and

capacity to hold space so beautifully for them, as they vulnerably shared their personal stories of cultural and social disconnection. Coming together for a weekend of cultural activities such as weaving provides context for this kind of community gathering, where a sense of belonging deepens cultural identity and offers tangible experiences of healing. Mary MacKillop Today very generously funded this program, and the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation of Health provided staff, transport and accommodation to enable seven women to make the long journey from Cunnamulla to the Yumba.

At the end of June, Megan also ran the *Healing and Belonging Through Culture* camp for Indigenous adults and children out on Gunggari country at Mt Moffat. Everyone who came had personal ties to Gunggari country, and spending the time together strengthened their connection to Gunggari land and each other. Megan said the cultural confidence gained from the camp was incredible as evidenced by the commitment of the children and teenagers to the cultural activities offered during the camp; weaving, traditional body painting and dance, preparing the fire, language and story. Some of the children sent Megan photos of them teaching their younger siblings how to weave when they returned home!

Megan was struck by how much pride the teenagers, in particular, took in their cultural identity - sharing the choices they are now making back at home, knowing they are connected to Gunggari mentors. Seeing them take the initiative to teach the younger children on the camp how to create a smoking fire for ceremony was

(continued next page)

2023 YARCK TO YEA WALK/RIDE/RUN

The Yarck to Yea Walk/Ride/Run is happening again this year and we would love you to join us.

When?: Saturday, 19 August 2023.

Where?: The Great Victorian Rail Trail between Yarck and Yea.

You can complete the entire 27km trail, or choose your starting point according to the distance you wish to walk or run.

After you cross the finishing line, we will celebrate with a BBQ lunch hosted by the Yea Catholic community.

This is a community event to raise funds to support the work of Highways and Byways.

For further event information:

Visit our website:
www.hb.org.au



or scan the QR code (right) on your mobile device.

For bookings:

Scan the QR code (right) on your mobile device



or visit trybooking:

www.trybooking.com/CJQSM

For enquiries:

Please contact: Jo Winton on email jo.winton@hb.org.au or via phone (03) 9087 2039.

IMAGE ABOVE: Participants of the *Healing and Belonging Through Culture* camp at the Yumba

really incredible. This work is so important not only for the wellbeing of those involved, but for having Indigenous young people grow up knowing their connection to land, and understanding their role in looking after themselves, the land and their culture. We thank Mary MacKillop Today for their support in funding this program, and look forward to sharing news of the women's cultural camps Megan is planning in the coming months.

We have a lot happening in the next few months and hope you will be able to join us in supporting our *Yarck to Yea Walk/Ride/Run* on Saturday, 19 August, the *Hobart John Wallis Lecture* on Saturday, 21 October with Dr. Jake Mudge and the *Toowoomba John Wallis Lecture* with Rev. Tim Costello on Saturday, 28 October. We hope to share a video recording of both the Hobart lecture and the Toowoomba lecture on our website.



IMAGE: David McCarthy at the Healing and Belonging Through Cultural Camp for Indigenous youth and adults.

MARY
MACKILLOP
today

FARMERS SUPPORTED TO LOOK AHEAD

GOONDIWINDI, QUEENSLAND (BIGAMBUL COUNTRY)

Farmers have a lot on their plate. They battle the challenges of weather - too much rain, dry seasons, poor crops, fires and floods - and somehow they have to juggle immediate outcomes with long-term sustainability. A recent summit in the Goondiwindi area has given 200 farmers and business people a boost, arming them with strategies for planning and management and helpful resources. Importantly, they were also supported to examine their well-being during challenging times in their business.

The Agribusiness Summit, run by Macintyre Ag Alliance with support from Highways and Byways, covered topics including agri-finance, soil microbiology, companion and intercropping, regenerative grazing, risk taking in the cattle market, farm planning and personal development.

Liz Otto from Cornerstone Sustainability asked participants to develop personal farm plans, set sustainability goals, and to identify specific actions and performance measures in a more holistic way.

"Liz encouraged participants to reflect on their strengths, identify weaknesses, get excited about potential opportunities, and be aware of any threats," said Louise Carroll from Macintyre Ag Alliance. "They were also encouraged to look beyond the bottom line as the only measure of success and ensure

sustainability was in their business plan."

Allan Parker, an internationally renowned negotiator and behavioural scientist, talked about building better communication strategies that promote resilience. He shared new ideas and strategies on how the participants could manage their mindset and emotions to remain level-headed during life's inevitable challenges, improve family relationships and strengthen their resilience.

"Allan stressed the importance of listening in negotiation. The best thing to do when someone comes to you with a problem is to listen, acknowledge, repeat the problem back to them and ask what they need to happen instead. He also demonstrated the importance of body language in diffusing hostile situations," Louise said.

"The summit also created opportunities for networking outside of the landholder or business owners usual networking group."

"As Australian farmers face ever-increasing challenges, Macintyre Ag Alliance is providing the foundations to evolve farming systems and challenge the status quo, and giving producers the skills and mindset to remain productive while enhancing the environment in which they work."



IMAGE - Allan Parker leads a workshop on communication, resilience, and emotional management at an agri-business summit convened by Macintyre Ag Alliance in Goondiwindi, Queensland.

CREATING GOOD WASTE

KARDINYA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA (WAJUK COUNTRY)

Every home composter and backyard worm farmer has, at some stage, battled smells, bugs and heat. It can break the spirit of the keenest waste warriors and derail their efforts. And it's the very reason the Kulungah Myah Community Centre in Perth, decided to tackle the issue, with support from Highways and Byways.

The centre in Kardinya recently ran an organic waste workshop as part of its comprehensive Earth Care Initiatives sustainability program. Waste educator Peg Davies, took the recyclers back to ground zero, showing participants how they can create very healthy compost and worm farms.

The centre's Chairperson, Renee Case, said the workshop dealt with basic practices and offered solutions for people living on acreage or in small suburban blocks or apartments. "We designed the workshop so that the information could be applied in everyday life. Lots of families came along so that the kids were also seeing how to transform any food waste and scraps into something that could be used in the garden," Renee said.

"One of the best aspects of the workshop was the willingness of people to talk about what they were doing and what wasn't working. This created an opportunity for real learning because people weren't frightened to talk about problems like smells, their problems with worm farms during a heat wave and other composting setbacks."

Renee said discussion about Bokashi bins in apartment kitchens was a revelation to many participants who were deterred by lack of space. She said feedback showed the hands on workshop had armed people with a lot of knowledge and confidence. "The workshop also created a sense of shared purpose amongst the people who came, discovering that others have the same issues. It was a great chance to learn and share resources."

The composting workshop was part of the Centre's wider agenda to find sustainable solutions to daily waste production. Renee said Earth Care Initiatives also include a waste textile drop-off service and donation drives for used sports goods and used stationary that are then repackaged for disadvantaged children. People leave each of these things at the centre and they are collected regularly. Rainbow Threads, a resident sewing group, has also started a party bunting hire service in partnership with the centre.



IMAGE: Peg Davies demonstrates worm composting.

WORKING TO RESTORE RAINFOREST BEAUTY

GRAFTON, NSW (GUMBAINGGIR COUNTRY)

Claire Purvis describes her time on Elizabeth Island, a river island at Grafton in NSW, as a big adventure in a different world. It was a world that was almost lost and overgrown until Claire and her team of volunteers began 'freeing' the remnant rainforest from invasive vines that were choking the trees. With support from Highways and Byways, members of the Susan and Elizabeth Recreation Land Manager have cleared tracks and established



IMAGE: Volunteers Nick and Anne Reeve on newly cleared tracks at Elizabeth Island.

new ones allowing access to parts of the island which are most in need of weeding.

The group of keen nature lovers regularly goes by tinnie to the island in the Clarence River, armed with equipment, to continue the hard work of regenerating the Crown land. "It's so close to Grafton but it feels far away. Even the bird calls are different. Today while working we heard a Spangled Drongo and rainforest pigeons," Claire said.

The island was popular with picnickers in the 1920s as well as cattle grazers who swam their cattle to the island until the 1990s, causing decades of destruction to native vegetation. Regular flooding also brought unwelcome seeds, particularly Balloon Vine, which has grown up to the sunlight and almost choked much of the remnant rainforest.

The financial support allowed the group to have a contractor forming and clearing paths by brushcutter, regularly over 12 months. Before then the volunteers came away with ticks and a heightened fear of snakes as they worked in knee-high grasses. The paths are now 'tame' enough to be maintained by volunteers. "We have a core group of about eight volunteers and they range in age from 30s to 80s. The 80 year-old is the volunteer who takes us out in his tinnie). We can get up to 14 people and we all share a love of nature," Claire said.

"We are currently working to regenerate a new area which we have mapped and identified what needs to be done. The area has some lovely rainforest remnants with Red and Black Bean trees, but there's also a wilderness of weeds, Lantana and Mulberries."

"We love going out there and we hate leaving. We know what this area could look like because there are patches of fine rainforest and we hope that one day it will all look like that."

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

DRAKE, NSW (BUNDJALUNG COUNTRY)

Clare Urquhart knows only too well that small animals and birds, as well as human beings, need a place to call home. With support from Highways and Byways and the local community, dozens of wildlife nesting boxes have been built and installed in the area around Drake in NSW. She hopes the nesting boxes will create a refuge for wildlife that lost habitat during the 2019-20 bushfires that hit the Drake area and destroyed many houses and surrounding bushlands.

The *Tiny Homes for Wildlife* project is run by Clare's organisation, Container of Dreams, which works to provide tiny homes to people affected by disasters, including the recent NSW floods. This year the organisation's focus also included homes for wildlife including Brushtail possums, Sugar Gliders, microbats, owls, Black Cockatoos and King Parrots.

"The area around here was hit very hard by the 2019 bushfires and it destroyed the habitat for so much wildlife. It could be 30 years before even some of it is restored. The trees and hollow logs provided a home for wildlife and now that is gone. Those trees don't grow overnight," Clare said.

Locals built about 40 nesting boxes at the workshops, which were held over three weeks. The boxes differed according to the wildlife they hoped to attract. Apart from playing a crucial role in the protection of wildlife in the area, Clare said the workshops were also a healing experience for participants.

"It's really important that people, who have lost so much, feel they are doing something positive that will improve their environment, the place where they are living," Clare said.

"The people at the workshop might not have all known each other, but they all share something very important and that is loss. So this shared common experience helps alleviate social isolation and people develop connections."

Clare said the workshops were so popular another one has since been held with help from volunteers and a local 'handyman'. "One important outcome from building the nesting boxes is that sense of hope for the future by working on healing themselves and the land they are living on. I think this will become a regular event for us."



IMAGE: John Raymond, Graeme Lightbody, Amanda Hartley and Cass Purdon with some of the completed nesting boxes

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

HEALING THE LAND - HEALING OURSELVES - TOGETHER

Highways and Byways is a national charity established by the Missionary Sisters of Service to support people and communities experiencing disadvantage and inequality across Australia.

We do this through our annual small grants and longer-term programs. Our programs are designed to strengthen community relationships and networks,

develop local leadership, and empower people to meet the challenges confronting them.

Highways and Byways is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission.

ABN: 87 622 436 551



LET'S CONNECT

✉ 90 Albion Road, Box Hill, VIC 3128

☎ (03) 9087 6039

🌐 newsletter@hb.org.au

🌐 www.hb.org.au

📘 @hb.org.au

🌐 highways-and-byways

📷 highwaysandbywaysltd

🐦 @HighwaysByways1

JOHN WALLIS MEMORIAL LECTURE HOBART

FEATURING DR JAKE MUDGE



Date: Saturday, 21 October 2023

Time: 2:30pm.

Venue: Media Suite, Glenorchy Campus, Guilford Young College, entry via Brisbane or Barrack Street

Keynote speaker: Melbourne-based theologian, teacher and priest Dr Jake Mudge will present on "*You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood: living fully, our shared, baptismal anointing*".

For further event information:

Visit our website: www.hb.org.au or scan the QR code (following) on your mobile device.

For bookings:

Contact Eva Dunn on 0417 734 503 or eva.dunn@gmail.com



TOOWOOMBA LECTURE

FEATURING REV TIM COSTELLO

Date: Sunday, 22 October 2023

Time: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Venue: St. Theresa's Parish Centre, 55 Curzon Street, East Toowoomba

Keynote speaker:

Rev. Tim Costello will speak on "*The Big Picture: Living in Hope and Awareness*".

For further information:

Visit our website: www.hb.org.au or email: hbqueensland@gmail.com

For bookings:

Scan the QR code (below) on your mobile device or visit trybooking at:

<https://www.trybooking.com/CJPYL>



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2023 SMALL GRANTS

Each year Highways and Byways provides small grants to community organisations for projects that address disadvantage and exclusion within towns and communities, especially in rural and regional Australia.

This year our program theme is '*Healing and Growing Together*' in recognition of the environmental and social challenges that rural and regional communities have endured over the last few years. Drought, bushfires and floods ravaged parts of the country, resulting in the loss of life and property, significant impacts on species and the destruction of vast tracts of land and habitat. The Covid19 pandemic also affected our very way of living. Long periods of isolation and restrictions on movement, education and trade affected all segments of the population, but none more so than our most vulnerable communities.

We were therefore keen to support projects that encourage environmental and ecological restoration and rehabilitation, and projects that bring communities back

together, to reconnect and to reduce isolation and loneliness. We wanted to support opportunities for people to collaborate and form new partnerships, where they could develop new skills and obtain new knowledge that would allow them to manage their land and environs sustainably into the future. We wanted to encourage and support the emergence of new leaders. We also wanted to foster Indigenous identity and cultural connections, through collaboration and connection, between people and with Country.

We are delighted to announce the 20 recipients of our 2023 Small Grants program. As you will read overleaf, these projects stretch the depth and breadth of the nation and represent a diverse range of activity that will not only care for land, waters and country, but also for the people who inhabit them.

Our grants would not be possible without the support of our donors – and we thank them for their continued generosity.



QUEENSLAND

1. Creative Country Association Inc, "Mental Health through Art", Murgon, QLD (Waka Waka Country), \$3,111

Monthly art classes led by visual artist Angela Pude for all local residents to enhance individual well-being and encourage community cohesion.

2. Wildhorse FM, "Wildhorse Wellness Project", Yarraman, QLD (Waka Waka Country), \$4,000

A wellness program embedded into the day-to-day broadcasting of the Wildhorse FM to address issues of community loneliness, isolation and mental health.

3. Roman Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, "Growing the Future: Sustainable Vegetable Garden Learning Resource", Goondiwindi, QLD (Bigambul Country), \$2,120

A sustainable garden and gardening program at St Mary's High School in Goondiwindi, involving students in garden planning and management.

NEW SOUTH WALES

4. Container of Dreams, "Native Beehive Making Workshop", Drake, NSW (Bundjalung Country), \$3,865

A community workshop to construct insulated hives for native stingless bees to be installed across the region.

5. Coraki CWA Preschool, "Healing the Land", Coraki, NSW (Bundjalung Country), \$4,000

Development of a bush Tucker garden to reintroduce flora and fauna into the kindergarten's playground after its premises were inundated by flood waters in 2022.

6. RiverSmart Australia, "Connecting Warren Indigenous Families to their Environmental & Cultural Heritage", Warren, NSW (Wayliwan Country), \$3,330

Tours of the Macquarie Marshes/Maliyanga for local Indigenous families to learn about their environmental and cultural significance.

7. Warrabinga Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation, "Warrabinga Wiradjuri Indigenous Cultural Expo", Mudgee, NSW (Wiradjuri Country), \$4,000

An Indigenous Cultural Sustainability Expo to promote awareness of Indigenous culture and land management practices.

8. Wambuul Permaculture, "Building a Regenerative Culture in the Central West", Bathurst, NSW (Wiradjuri Country), \$2,700

Quarterly events to connect permaculture practitioners and share knowledge on current practices.

9. Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council, "Women's Healing", Goulburn, NSW (Gundungurra Country), \$4,000

A two-day workshop for Indigenous women focused on women's issues and healing to promote well-being and enhanced mental health.

10. Brungle/Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council, "Tree Identification & Seed Collecting", Tumut, NSW (Wiradjuri Country), \$4,000

Workshops for the local Indigenous community to identify and record trees and species of cultural significance, and to collect seeds for propagation.

VICTORIA

11. Baranduda Landcare, "Fostering Community Relationships & Skills Around Grassland Restoration", Baranduda, VIC (Jaitmatang Country), \$4,000

A field day and workshop to promote the restoration of native grasslands in the Baranduda and Wodonga regions.

12. Trust for Nature, "Itjumatj Woka, Itjumatj Wala, Itjumatj Yenbena/Healthy Country, Healthy Water, Healthy People", Wangaratta, VIC (Bangerang Country), \$4,000

Collaboration with the Bangerang people to maintain culturally significant trees across the Wangaratta region.

13. St Kilian's Parish, "St Kilian's Parish Community Garden", Bendigo, VIC (Dja Dja Wurrung/Taungurung Country), \$3,270

Development of a Community Garden at St Kilian's parish.

14. Woodend Bee Friendly Society, "Swarm Monitoring Project", Woodend, VIC (Woiworung/ Djadjawurung Country), \$3,000

Research to identify the extent to which swarms of the European honeybee are posing an ecological and nuisance hazard through their occupation of tree hollows/cavities which would otherwise be used by native animals and birds.

15. Kirrae Health Service Inc, "Art, Wellbeing, Healing Room", Purnim, VIC (Gunditjimara Country), \$4,000

Development of an art, well-being and healing room and delivery of an art program for the local Indigenous community.

TASMANIA

16. Seymour Community Action Group Inc, "Seymour Wetland & Conservation Area Restoration Project", Bicheno, TAS (Paredarerme Country), \$4,000

Development of a management plan for 54ha recently added to the Seymour Conservation Area, and working bees and workshops to collect seeds and propagate tube stock to be re-introduced to the site.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

17. Katanning's Piesse Park Community Inc, "Piesse Park Activity Trail", Katanning, WA, (Wiilman/Goreng/ Kaniyang Country), \$3,070

Development of an activity trail and extension of a wildlife corridor across Piesse Park.

18. Kulungah Myah Family Centre Inc, "Collaborative Art Workshop for Youth", Kardinya, WA (Wajuk Country), \$1,650

A youth-focused art workshop led by Aboriginal artist Julianne Wade to promote an awareness and appreciation of the local Noongar culture.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

19. Wellspring Community Inc, "Care for Creation - Listening to First Nations & Celtic Voices - A Wellspring and Iona Listening Pilgrimage", Alice Springs, NT (Arrernte Country), \$3,950

A pilgrimage to engage Alice Springs locals, Indigenous people and local Christian and contemplative communities in conversations about the spiritual roots of caring for creation.

20. Thamarrurr Development Corporation, "Wadeye Mens Shed Landcare Project", Wadeye, NT (Murrinh-patha Country), \$4,000

A Landcare program for disengaged Indigenous youth, who have been assigned to the Thamarrurr Men's Shed by the courts.



Missionary Sisters of Service

A MISSION OF LOVE AND SERVICE INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

NEWSLETTER

Celebrating 79 years of foundation

Volume 56 No. 2 | August 2023

This year, on 8th July, we celebrated our 79th anniversary of the MSS beginnings. We have much to rejoice and are so grateful that our journey continues with so many of you as part of this, including through the great work of *Highways and Byways - Healing the Land, Healing Ourselves, Together* and its team. It's something that our pioneering women, Gwen Morse, Alice Carroll, Kath Moore, Joyce O'Brien and our founder, Fr John Wallis, could not have imagined on 8th July 1944.

To mark Rosary House Day (our community homes were originally known as Rosary House), we gathered for scones and tea in our various locations. Three of our sisters, Corrie van den Bosch, Frances McShane and Lorraine Groves set off on a wonderful pilgrimage around Hobart, Tasmania, revisiting many of the nearby places of significance to our community. The photos below show:

Top row, from left: Lorraine and Frances enjoying tea and scones; Lorraine and Corrie at 432 Elizabeth St, North Hobart; 166 Macquarie St, Hobart. **Centre row, from left:** 163 Gordons Hill Rd, Hobart; Rupert Ave, Newtown; 23a Cadbury Rd. **Third row:** Some of our sisters gathered in Melbourne. From left: Pat Kelly, Catherine Carr (MSS Coordinator), Bernadette Wallis, Pat Brain, Bernadette Madden, June Dunford, Stancea Vichie, Kath Clune and Betty McManus; Cheryl Thomson MSS gathered with friends in Whyalla, SA; and Lorraine and Corrie in Hobart, Tas.

See more information about the day and each of the photos on our website: www.missionarysisters.org.au/news. And be sure to mark next year's date in the diary, as it'll be our 80th anniversary of foundation. We hope to celebrate this in a special way.



Photos on this page, courtesy MSS

We continue our journey toward a First Nations Voice to Parliament

It's official. Australians will be voting in a referendum before the end of 2023, to determine whether we, as a nation, support an Indigenous Voice to Parliament being enshrined in the Constitution. Together with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia (the network of Congregational leaders across Australia), we MSS stand with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their call for a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution.



We encourage you to visit a new website created by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) with the support of the Australian Catholic bishops – www.indigenousvoice.church – to help inform and educate all people of good will, about the upcoming referendum, and how best to discern this important question, in the light of faith, justice and compassion. As stated on the website: *At the heart of the upcoming Voice to Parliament Referendum is the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the world's oldest continuing culture, in the Australian Constitution.* The Voice to Parliament Referendum provides Australians with a unique opportunity to come together as a community to enshrine in our Constitution the place of our First Nations peoples and their right to be heard on issues that impact on them.

MSS at Mission: One Heart, Many Voices conference

Our congregational leader, Stancea Vichie MSS, attended the sixth 'Mission: One Heart Many Voices' national conference held in Sydney in May 2023. Held every two years, and convened by Catholic Religious Australia in conjunction with Catholic Mission, this year's conference theme was based on Pope Francis's words, 'Come, let us talk this over. Let us dare to dream' (from his book, *Dare to Dream*). Over three days, a range of keynotes and workshops were held, with opportunities for discussion, reflection, and collaboration with many others from across the country. Stancea has been a long-time attendee of the conference, having been a member of the Catholic Religious Australia Mission Network for many years, which is also involved in the formation of the conference program and suggestion of speakers. She 'went to everything' and was grateful for the opportunity to hear from so many knowledgeable, inspiring and big-hearted people, particularly those helping to deepen our understanding of the challenges faced by First Nations peoples.



Vale Beryl Gleeson, 1934 - 2023

It is with deep sadness that we share the news that Beryl Gleeson MSS died on Monday 19 June, aged 88 years. We continue to keep Beryl's family and friends, and our community of women who are mourning the loss of this wonderful woman, in our thoughts and prayers. The funeral for Beryl was held on 27 June 2023, at St Anthony's Catholic Church, in Toowoomba, Queensland. A replay of the funeral can be seen via our website (go to the News section), which includes some beautiful words of remembrance from Stancea Vichie MSS.

Photos on this page, courtesy Fiona Basile

Pat Kelly MSS, a life of humble service

Pat Kelly was born in Townsville, Queensland, and joined the Missionary Sisters of Service in 1962. During her years she has worked in parishes and the Correspondence School and where needed conducted Family Clusters and Effectiveness Training, and coordinated Higher Aged Groups, and a Carers Support Group.

Pat's years of mission have certainly taken her into the highways and byways of Australia—she has worked in the outback and rural communities in Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland, and in her last years of mission worked in Gin Gin and Richmond, both in Queensland.

Pat now lives in Clayton, Victoria, and enjoys getting involved in things within her community, including through her local Vinnies and South East Volunteers. She regularly takes part in Monash Council activities, attending interesting talks, and she enjoys studying various topics through U3A (University of the Third Age). Recently, she enjoyed a visit from her two sisters from Queensland—they were lucky to catch Pat, as she's often out and about visiting different places of interest, or enjoying weekend travels.



Photo courtesy Fiona Basile



From the archives:

Our community of women in Toowoomba, Qld, from left: Win Sharpe, Betty McManus, Paul Coad (front left), Alice Fox, Pat Kelly (front right), Margaret Rogers, and Marcia McMahon MSS.

Betwixt light and darkness: a reflection

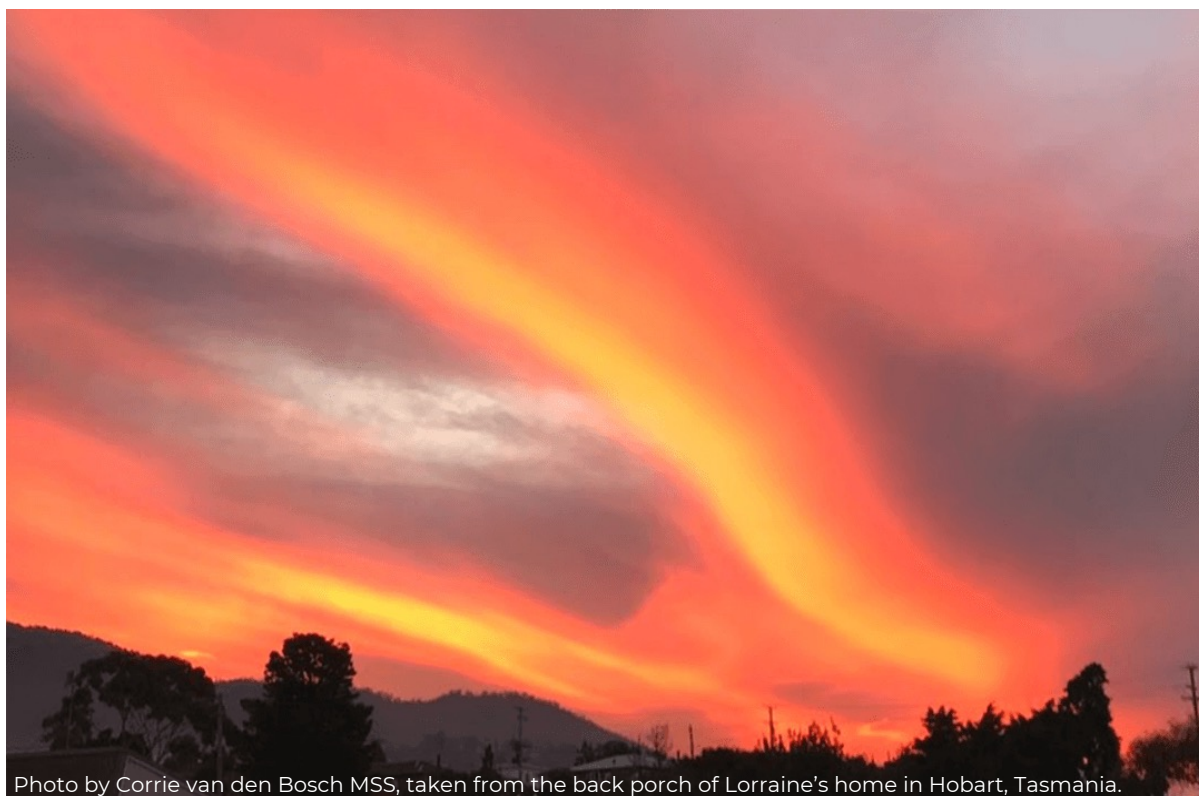


Photo by Corrie van den Bosch MSS, taken from the back porch of Lorraine's home in Hobart, Tasmania.

In a powerful and poignant reflection, Corrie van den Bosch MSS contemplates all that we hold, between the light and dark of our world, and our experiences as created beings. A visit to Port Arthur, on the Tasman Peninsula, on Tasmania's east coast, reminds her of both the rugged and fierce beauty of that part of the world, and the tragic history which goes back to the earliest times of the colony. 'I never get used to it: the cruelty with which we humans can treat one another! And in a natural environment of such powerful beauty.'

'I know the suffering embedded in the Tasman Peninsula is not only a past event. It continues in the depths of suffering of Earth as our lifestyle puts enormous pressure on its life and life systems, and on all the beings, human and other-than-human, that depend on those life systems.' In a deeply moving way, Corrie laments the ways in which her heart's attention is drawn to the 'cry of people, animals, reptiles and insects in war-torn countries: their homes and habitats are bombed and burning... We experience cyclones, floods, tornadoes, drought. Trust in leaders, public institutions and even in Churches, has worn thin.' God is questioned: Where, Lord, are we heading in this mess? Do you weep, Lord...?

Though there is much to lament, and perhaps worry about, toward the end of the reflection, Corrie gives us a sense of hope. That, just as there is darkness, there is light. 'Your words reach across the darkness: Come to me, all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest'. She writes, 'An image arises in me. I know that image. It comes to me whenever I open my heart to experience the depths of suffering in our world: it is you, the Crucified One, your body rent in two, and in the fissure all the suffering beings of the world.'

'You embrace their suffering as your own, and invite me to bear it with you, in you; to bear it with your love, your compassion and your powerlessness; and yes, to bear it with serenity and joy, your serenity and joy.'

Corrie poses the question: Might it not be that the destructive forces that cause the world so much suffering, are actually the labour pains birthing a new epoch, a new global consciousness which calls forth a new phase of being of our world, our Universe?

Corrie has been part of Contemplation Evolution Network (CEN) for many years, and regularly writes reflections for CEN. Read the full reflection, which she wrote for CEN June, on our website: www.missionarysisters.org.au/News