

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS LTD

2023

# ANNUAL REPORT



**Highways  
and Byways**

HEALING THE LAND.  
HEALING OURSELVES.  
TOGETHER.

# HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS



## ABOUT US

Highways and Byways Ltd 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 partnership programs. Our programs are developed to strengthen community relationships and networks, develop local leadership, and empower people to meet the challenges confronting them.

Highways and Byways is an Australian public company and registered charity governed by a Board of Directors.

Our head office is based in Box Hill, Melbourne, and we have volunteer branches in Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria.



## OUR MISSION: HEALING THE LAND, HEALING OURSELVES, TOGETHER

Highways and Byways continues the vision and mission of the Missionary Sisters of Service,

acknowledging and connecting with the Indigenous people of this land,

reaching out in hope and love to people socially and geographically isolated,

strengthening community relationships and cultural identity,

contributing to the regeneration and healing of our earth,

developing local leadership and empowering people to respond the challenges that confront us.

## FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Highways and Byways, in the spirit of the Missionary Sisters of Service, acknowledges that our work and our homes are on the sacred land of many cultural groups of the First Nations people of Australia.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with First Nations people in a spirit which encompasses voice, treaty and truth-telling to ensure a better future for all.

Our First Nations people have lived on this land for 65,000 years. They are the oldest continuing culture on Earth. We strive to listen deeply to their words, wisdom and vision, so we may better understand our connection to this ancient and sacred land that we live on, and let it reverberate through our presence, our words and our actions.

Highways and Byways is grateful for the many First Nations people who have generously worked with us

both through their friendships with the Missionary Sisters of Service in the past, and through our Small Grants Program and our Seeds of Connection Program in Roma, south east Queensland, with Mithaka woman Megan Brown.

We feel truly blessed to walk beside our First Nations brothers and sisters, and trust we will grow stronger as we continue to walk together toward healing and unity.

*IMAGE FRONT PAGE: Judy Cain, Bernadette Wallis mss, Bernadette Garvey, Lorna Slaben and Kevin Garvey at the 2023 Yarck to Yea Walk/Ride/Run. Image courtesy of Fiona Basile Photography.*

*ABOVE: IMAGE: A participant at the Healing and Belonging through Culture Youth Camp at Mt Moffat makes a traditional performance.*

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## SMALL GRANTS

- Small grants valuing \$70,066 were provided to 20 community organisations for projects aligned with the program theme of *Healing and Growing Together*.
- Small grants were distributed in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.
- Small grants supported a diversity of projects including Indigenous cultural recognition and wellbeing programs, land and water rehabilitation and restoration initiatives, art therapy programs, youth engagement, community events, new equipment, community gardens, networking and education.
- Grant recipients included local Landcare groups, Indigenous land managers, a Men's Shed, community groups, education providers, parish communities, a community radio station and family and health centres.

## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

- The **Restoring Nature and Communities Program** in partnership with North East Bioregional Network provided employment for four local men to undertake ecological restoration work in and around Skyline Tier in north-eastern Tasmania.
- The **Seeds of Connection** program in southern Queensland delivered several cultural immersion and well-being activities:
  - *Healing and Belonging through Culture Youth program*, an on-Country camp for 10 Indigenous youths at Mt Moffat to learn about language, food and cultural practices.
  - *Healing and Belonging through Culture Women's program*, an on-Country camp at the Yumba, Mitchell, for 32 Indigenous women to reconnect with their culture and share knowledge and wisdom between generations.
  - A *Women's Earth and Healing Retreat* on the Sunshine Coast for 10 Indigenous women to connect, learn and reflect on their culture, the significance of the land, and relationships with each other.
- Free2B Girls in Tasmania implemented the **Free2b Time** program, matching trained facilitators with young women who are socially and geographically isolated to help them to navigate the challenges of living remotely.



## EVENTS

- Participants joined us from across the State to traverse the Great Victorian Rail Trail as part of the **Yarck to Yea Walk-Ride-Run**.
- At the **John Wallis Winter Walk** in Hobart, walkers reflected upon on the life and achievements of Missionary Sisters of Service founder Fr John Wallis.
- Rev. Dr Jake Mudge spoke at the **John Wallis Memorial Lecture** in Tasmania on the topic, *You are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood: living fully our shared baptismal calling*.
- Rev. Tim Costello AO spoke at the **Toowoomba Lecture** in Queensland on *The Big Picture: Living in Hope and Awareness*.

*IMAGE ABOVE: In a project led by Hay Plains Landcare, students at Hay Public School collaborated with Wiradjuri artist Owen Lyons to design a cultural learning and yarning circle in the school grounds (2022 small grant recipient).*

# FROM THE CHAIR

MARG CASEY

The 2022-2023 year consolidated the changes that have been made in recent years to set Highways and Byways up as the independent mission entity of the Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS). As such, we have continued to develop our Small Grants Program and longer-term programs in a way that is true to the spirit and mission of the MSS; walking alongside small, remotely isolated communities, nurturing new leaders and supporting those wanting to make positive changes in the lives of those less fortunate.

Our discussions with Mary MacKillop Today (MMT) are ongoing. Our Executive Officer Jane Collopy and the CEO of MMT have held discussions at a grassroots level based on the practicalities of how the programs could work together. As the year progresses more detailed conversations will be held at Board level.

After 13 years on the Board of the John Wallis Foundation and later the Highways and Byways

Board, Brian Lennon resigned at the end of 2022. His contribution over those years both on the Board, and in many other capacities, has been invaluable and we thank Brian very much for his insights and gentle way of working for the best interests of H&B.

Helen Casey joined the Board in February 2023 and brings with her financial, governance and corporate experience. This gives good balance to the strengths of our Directors' skills across the Board.

I extend my gratitude to each and every one of our Directors who once again have given so much of their time and expertise to H&B, guided and supported by the MSS and the Stewardship Council. To Jane, Marnie and Megan, my thanks for another year of growth and for their professionalism.



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER

JANE COLLOPY

This year, Highways and Byways has been pleased to continue providing Small Grants to small

communities around the country facing the challenges of living remotely. We were passionate about providing support to local communities who wanted to heal and grow, through projects focused on building connections both in relationship with each other and through their connection to the land. Many thanks to our Program and Communications Manager Marnie Wylde for her work in making our grants accessible and known across all the highways and byways of remote Australia!

We have continued to support our ecological program *Restoring Nature and Communities* in north east Tasmania, through program manager Todd Dudley, and are glad to see the progress his team continue to make in enabling the land to return to its beautiful native state.

Highways and Byways has been thrilled with the development of further Indigenous cultural initiatives through our *Seeds of Connection* program, led by Mithika woman Megan Brown in Roma, south east Queensland. In the year leading up to the Referendum on the Voice to Parliament, our relationship with Megan was an absolute gift to all of us at Highways and Byways, as we explored our role in our country's need to better understand and acknowledge the First Nations people of this land; a

people who have been here for over 60,000 years, making them the most ancient civilisation on Earth.

In January 2023 we consolidated and grew our connection with 2022 Small Grant recipient Free2b Girls by making them our third project partner at Highways and Byways. This enabled organisation founder Tani Langoulant to establish further organisational infrastructure to directly employ and train facilitators for the new program Free2b Time. This program provides supportive environments and facilitates local relationships that can nurture new experiences for young people living in geographically and socially isolated areas. Free2b Girls has become the go-to for supporting young women in the north eastern region of Tasmania, and we are eager to help them become a locally supported and sustainable organisation for many years to come.

As we moved through the year, we worked hard to optimise and streamline our administration and financial processes. We want to continue to provide as much relationship-based support to disadvantaged communities across Australia, and we particularly thank our small and large donors, and our grant providers Mary MacKillop Today, Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, Religious of Queensland and our many generous and gifted volunteers who are the core of our small, but highly valuable Highways and Byways.

# 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.

In 2023, our program theme was *'Healing and Growing Together'*. This was chosen in recognition of the environmental and social challenges that rural and regional communities had been confronting. Drought, bushfires and floods had 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 had also led to long periods of isolation and restrictions on movement, education and trade.

We were therefore keen to support projects that encouraged environmental and ecological restoration and rehabilitation, and projects that brought 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 environments 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.

Twenty grants totalling \$70,066 were provided to community organisations across Australia.

As the following map demonstrates, these projects stretch the depth and breadth of the nation. As outlined in further detail in the following section, they also represent a diverse range of activity that will not only care for land, waters and country, but also for the people who inhabit them.



# SMALL GRANT RECIPIENTS & PROJECTS

## 1. MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH ART

### Creative Country Association Inc

Murgon, QLD (Waka Waka Country)

\$3,111

Creative Country Association will deliver *Mental Health Through Art*, an active program of cultural development to enhance individual well-being and encourage community cohesion, in a region currently confronting one of the highest annual suicide rates in Australia.

Monthly art classes will be held at the Ancient Songbird Centre, a new art gallery recently opened in Murgon by Creative Country Association. The classes will be open to and welcoming of all local residents, including farmers and youth from the nearby Cherbourg Aboriginal community. Classes will be led by visual artist Angela Pude.

## 2. WILDHORSE WELLNESS PROJECT

### Wildhorse FM

Yarraman, QLD (Waka Waka Country)

\$4,000

Wild Horse FM is a community radio station airing in the Yarraman, Blackbutt, Cooyar and Maidenwell regions of south east Queensland. The *Wildhorse Wellness Project* will address issues of community loneliness, isolation and mental health through a wellness program embedded into the day-to-day broadcasting of the network. It will include a range of activities centred around five wellness themes:

- Getting healthy - for example, a community morning walk to music and playing 'get up' and boogie music throughout the day.
- Learning – podcasts to expand knowledge and specific learning content, such as a gardening show.
- Showing kindness – five-second "shout outs" to let loved ones know others are thinking of them and feel-good sessions celebrating the community.
- Connecting more – a coffee and chat session at local parks or cafes, and supporting community meetings and events with a positive/upbeat presence.
- Taking notice – mindfulness cues throughout the day

These and other wellness activities will be informed by Bunyarra Wellbeing Co, a mental health counselling, coaching and consultancy service operating in regional and remote Queensland.



## 3. GROWING THE FUTURE: SUSTAINABLE VEGETABLE GARDEN LEARNING RESOURCE

### Roman Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba (St Mary's School Goondiwindi)

Goondiwindi, QLD (Bigambul Country)

\$2,120

St Mary's High School in Goondiwindi, Queensland will develop a sustainable garden and gardening program. Students will be involved in all facets of garden management, including planning, planting, maintenance, and eventual harvesting of garden produce. They will be supported by teachers, parents, and members of the wider community.

The program will provide students with an opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills in agriculture, biology, ecology, budgeting and environmental science, and a wider appreciation of the nutritional and health benefits of fresh produce. It will also teach them valuable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. Produce grown in the garden will be donated to local community groups and used in the school's Tuck Shop.

## 4. NATIVE BEEHIVE MAKING WORKSHOP

### Container of Dreams

Drake, NSW (Bundjalung Country)

**\$3,865**

Container of Dreams will hold a one-day workshop for residents of Drake and the surrounding districts of NSW to construct insulated hives for native stingless bees. Native stingless bees have a long history as pollinators in Australia, however, they confront a range of threats to their ongoing viability including drought, fire, climate change and loss of plant diversity. The *Native Beehive Making Workshop* will raise awareness about Australian native stingless bee species and inspire action that encourages them to thrive in a region that was significantly impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires. The workshop will provide participants with the technical skills to create and manage a hive, as well as the use of tools and equipment, and a social opportunity for people experiencing social isolation. Each participant will construct one beehive to take home and install across the region.

## 5. HEALING THE LAND

### Coraki CWA Preschool

Coraki, NSW (Bundjalung Country)

**\$4,000**

Coraki CWA Preschool in Coraki NSW will establish a bushtucker garden to reintroduce flora and fauna into its playground after its premises were inundated by flood waters in 2022. Children, educators, families, and the wider community will work cooperatively to plan and construct the garden, with all work occurring when the children are present so that they can be fully engaged

throughout the process. Once established, the garden will remain accessible to the public who will be encouraged to work alongside the children and educators in its ongoing care. The project aims to re-establish community relationships impacted by not only the Covid19 pandemic but the 2022 floods, which widely affected the township. The preschool acknowledges the importance of bringing the community together for a collaborative and healing initiative at this time.

## 6. CONNECTING WARREN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES TO THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

### RiverSmart Australia

Warren, NSW (Wayliwan Country)

**\$3,330**

RiverSmart Australia will host tours of the Macquarie Marshes/Maliyanga Ngurra for Indigenous families from the Warren region of NSW. The Macquarie Marshes are one of the largest inland wetlands in south eastern Australia and a major waterbird breeding area. The Marshes also hold significant cultural values for the local Wayliwan people. Warren and the surrounding regions are highly disadvantaged, with significant levels of domestic violence, disenchanted youth, limited career opportunities and social support. Activities that give people a sense of pride, belonging and knowledge of culture are considered important to addressing these issues. The tours will also provide an opportunity for recent graduates of a TAFE NSW Indigenous tour guiding course to showcase their skills. This may, in turn, encourage other members of the community to pursue similar roles.



IMAGE ABOVE: The installation of leaky dams across the Broken Hill Regeneration Area by Landcare Broken Hill led to wildflowers blooming. (2022 small grant recipient).

## 7. WARRABINGA WIRADJURI INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY EXPO

### Warrabinga Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation

Mudgee, NSW (Wiradjuri Country)

\$4,000

Warrabinga Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation will stage an *Indigenous Cultural Sustainability Expo* in Mudgee, NSW to promote awareness of Indigenous culture and land management practices. The Expo will feature speakers on cultural environmental and sustainability practices; demonstrations on bush tucker cooking and cultural practices such as weaving, art, language, toolmaking, dance, and didgeridoo; and activities for children, including painting and games.

The Expo aims to encourage yarning, reconnection and well-being following the Covid19 pandemic, and the uptake of Indigenous environmental practices to sustain the land for future generations. It will also provide an economic boost to the region's business and tourism sector, while also building the region's brand as a destination to learn about and experience Indigenous culture.

## 8. BUILDING A REGENERATIVE CULTURE IN THE CENTRAL WEST

### Wambuul Permaculture

Bathurst, NSW (Wiradjuri Country)

\$2,700

Throughout 2022 Wambuul Permaculture delivered a course in sustainable permaculture. Its program, which was led by accredited permaculture teachers examined sustainable/regenerative food production, landscapes and community design. As a result of this program, there now exists a network of permaculture practitioners in the central west of NSW.

The *Building a Regenerative Culture in the Central West* project will build on this momentum, creating spaces for the community to continue to come together in a less formal setting to share experiences and further their learning. Three events, held quarterly, will provide updates on the permaculture curriculum and information sharing from across the region. Keynote speakers will include permaculture expert and educator Rowe Morrow, and Cathie Hale, an award-winning environmental activist and local permaculture market gardener. Graduates of the 2022 course will also share their permaculture designs.

IMAGE: Members of the Corny Point Progress Association in South Australia propagated native plants to revegetate a multi-use pathway in Corny Point (2021 and 2022 small grant recipient).

## 9. WOMEN'S HEALING

### Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council

Goulburn, NSW (Gundungurra Country)

\$4,000

Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council will deliver a two-day workshop for Indigenous women focused on women's issues and healing. Many in this community have had recent experiences of 'sorry business' (the grief that comes with the loss of life and of a loved one). The workshop aims to improve the well-being and mental health of participants, through shared experiences, shared grief, and connection with culture. It will also provide an avenue of support for the participants and a new community of Indigenous women with whom they can connect culturally. Activities will include yarning circles, art, and weaving.

The workshop will be held in Goulburn, a known meeting place for many different Indigenous groups, and will be inclusive of women from Mulwaree, Wollondilly, Wiradjuri, Gundungarra, Dharrook (Dharug), Tharawal (Dharawal), Tarlo, Lachlan, Pajong, Parramarragoo, Cookmal, Burra Burra and Ngunawal groups.





## 10. TREE IDENTIFICATION & SEED COLLECTING

### Brungle/Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council

Tumut, NSW (Wiradjuri Country)  
\$4,000

Brungle/Tumut Local Aboriginal Land will provide an opportunity for the local Indigenous community to connect to Country through workshops to identify and record trees and species of cultural significance, and to collect seeds for propagation.

The *Tree Identification and Seed Collecting* project has been developed at the request of the local Indigenous community, who are eager to improve their knowledge of culturally significant trees and seeds.

Trees and seeds can provide valuable insight into Indigenous history, including where and how Indigenous people lived and used local resources. Some seeds can also hold special or spiritual significance. Knowledge of culturally significant trees is also important to ensure the future protection of these trees, and the propagation of native flora can support local revegetation efforts.



IMAGE: Members of Friends of the Forest and Conservation Volunteers Australia planted trees and shrubs to create a wildlife corridor across Greenhide Reserve in Linville, Queensland (2022 small grant recipient).

## 11. FOSTERING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS & SKILLS AROUND GRASSLAND RESTORATION IN THE BARANDUDA-WODONGA AREA

### Baranduda Landcare

Baranduda, VIC (Jaitmatang Country)  
\$4,000

Baranduda Landcare, Kiewa Catchment Landcare Group and Wodonga Urban Landcare Network will come together to promote the restoration of native grasslands in the Baranduda and Wodonga areas of north east Victoria. They will facilitate two events:

- a field day where participants will learn about successful and innovative techniques for re-establishing native grasses within revegetation areas; and
- a workshop at the Our Native Garden Nursery (a Landcare-managed nursery) where participants will learn about propagation/seed collection with a focus on native grasses.

Native grasses are often forgotten in revegetation projects due to difficulty in establishment from weed competition, despite their important role in providing habitat, pollination, and soil organic matter. These events will therefore promote awareness of the importance of native grasses in the ecosystem, encourage people to include them in their plantings and promote connectivity in the wider Landcare community through a cross-network partnership.

## 12. ITJUMATJ WOKA, ITJUMATJ WALA, ITJUMATJ YENBENA

### Trust for Nature

Wangaratta, VIC (Bangerang Country)  
\$4,000

"Itjumatj woka, itjumatj wala, itjumatj yenbena" means 'healthy country, healthy water, healthy people' in the language of the Bangerang people. A recent cultural mapping exercise undertaken by the Bangerang people across the Wangaratta area identified culturally significant trees, many of which are suffering from lack of care, including lack of pruning, absence of cultural burning, historical soil compaction and nutrient enrichment from past grazing activities.

Trust for Nature will work with Bangerang traditional owners to maintain these culturally significant trees. The project will take a holistic approach to healing the land, addressing issues of soil health, tree health and water management, providing opportunities for Bangerang people to connect to Country in a meaningful way and to develop practical caring for Country skills, particularly about significant tree management and associated soil and water health.

### 13. ST KILIAN'S PARISH GARDEN

#### St Kilian's Parish

Bendigo, VIC (Dja Dja  
Wurrung/Taungurung Country)

**\$3,270**

St Kilian's Parish is in the process of becoming an Earthcare Parish Community and will establish a community garden within the church grounds.

The *St Kilian's Community Garden* project will enhance opportunities for social interaction amongst parish members and groups associated with the parish while at the same time providing a low-cost, safe venue where people can cooperate and learn new skills related to food production (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous and inclusive of Indian, Karen and Filipino parishioners).

The garden will also serve as an educative resource for students at St Kilian's Primary School, DOXA School (an alternative Catholic education school for teenagers at risk) and L'Arche (a community of people with and without intellectual disabilities), and will be a gathering place for parishioners before and after Mass and funeral services.

### 14. SWARM MONITORING PROJECT

#### Woodend Bee Friendly Society

Woodend, VIC  
(Woiworung/Djadjawurung Country)

**\$3,000**

Woodend Bee Friendly Society (WBFS) will undertake a research initiative to identify the extent to which swarms of the European honeybee (an exotic species) are posing an ecological and nuisance hazard through their occupation of tree hollows and cavities which would otherwise be used by native animals and birds.

Approximately 150 'bait boxes' constructed by the local Men's Shed will be distributed across defined and mapped areas of the Macedon Ranges region. The boxes will be monitored weekly over a four-month period by members of the WBFS. While the positive impacts of pollination are widely known, the deleterious effects of bee swarms on native fauna habitats and the ecology of the natural landscape are largely unknown. This study aims to gain some insight into the extent of the problem and inform the development of future ecological management strategies by environmental authorities.

*IMAGE: Students from Byron Community Primary School learnt about the importance of bugs and worms to soil and garden health at a workshop lead by Byron Youth Services (2022 small grant recipient).*

### 15. ART, WELLBEING, HEALING ROOM

#### Kirrae Health Service Inc

Purnim, VIC (Gunditjimara Country)  
**\$4,000**

Kirrae Health Service will convert a disused office space into an art, well-being and healing room whereit will provide a supported art therapy program to its Indigenous clients experiencing mental health, substance abuse and other social or personal issues.

For many in this region, Covid19 and lockdowns exacerbated issues of social isolation, unemployment, family dysfunction, violence, school refusal, anxiety, depression, self-harm, and agoraphobia, with some community members still reluctant to leave their homes for fear of the virus or shame. Participants will be encouraged to share their stories through art, which is known to promote wellbeing, and encourage a reconnection with one's culture, with others, and with the wider community.





## 16. SEYMOUR WETLAND & CONSERVATION AREA RESTORATION

**Seymour Community Action Group Inc**  
Bicheno, TAS (Paredarerme Country)  
\$4,000

Seymour Community Action Group Inc (SCAGI) will develop a management plan for an area of 54 ha which has recently incorporated into the Seymour Conservation Area.

This area was once industrialised land that has been revegetated over many years by SCAGI. It now comprises coastal health, freshwater wetlands and coastal grassland. It is part of the coastal ecosystem and creates a corridor which creates a link to the foreshore from the hinterland. The management plan will give the community a framework and pathway to manage and protect the area in the long-term.

SCAGI will also engage the local community through working bees and workshops to collect seeds and propagate tube stock to be re-introduced on-site, and will undertake weeding to enable natural regrowth and protect self-seeded young plants.

## 17. PIESE PARK ACTIVITY TRAIL

**Katanning's Piesse Park Community Inc**  
Katanning, WA  
(Wiilman/Goreng/Kaniyang Country)  
\$3,070

Piesse Park Community Inc will undertake revegetation works and develop an activity trail across Piesse Park in Katanning, Western Australia.

Piesse Park is a public reserve that features several freshwater lakes, walkways and cycleways, a nature playground, and various public amenities. An eco-centre provides year-round environmental education programs. It is also an area of significance to the local Noongar community. The new activity trail will extend a wildlife corridor across the Park and feature activities marked out along a pathway, bordered by native plantings, logs and rocks.

## 18. COLLABORATIVE ART WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH

**Kulungah Myah Family Centre Inc**  
Kardinya, WA (Wajuk Country)  
\$1,650

Kulungah Myah Community Centre will deliver a youth-focused art workshop led by Aboriginal artist Julianne Wade.

This collaborative activity aims to promote an awareness and appreciation of the culture of the local Noongar people, with a particular emphasis on Indigenous approaches to environmental care. The program has a strong social aspect, helping to generate belonging, connection, awareness, and understanding amongst youth within the local community, which are all necessary elements to supporting mental health and wellbeing post-COVID. It also has a strong educational focus and aims to inspire participants to view nature with respect and wonder, and to develop a sense of personal responsibility towards environmental protection.

*IMAGE: Members of the Country Women's Association Tasmanian Online Branch undertook a planting day to grow produce for local food banks (2022 small grant recipient).*

## 19. CARE FOR CREATION - LISTENING TO FIRST NATIONS & CELTIC VOICES (A WELLSPRING AND IONA LISTENING PILGRIMAGE)

### Wellspring Community Inc

Alice Springs, NT (Arrernte Country)

\$3,950

“Care for Creation - Listening to First Nations and Celtic voices” is a component of a wider national pilgrimage by the Wellspring Community (an Australia-wide ecumenical community working to promote spirituality, social justice, care for the earth and a just relationship between Indigenous Australians and later comers) and its Scottish counterpart, the Iona Community.

The Pilgrimage will provide listening spaces and places for conversations about the spiritual roots of caring for creation. These conversations will include locals, First Nations people, local Christian and contemplative communities, the leaders of the Iona and Wellspring communities and other visitors. Events in Alice Springs will involve time will be spent on Country with Arrernte Elders to engage with their art and Country, and with the local communities who are dealing with the complexities of living in Central Australia at this time.

## 20. WADEYE MENS SHED LANDCARE PROJECT

### Thamarrurr Development Corporation

Wadeye, NT (Murrinh-patha Country)

\$4,000

Thamarrurr Development Corporation will deliver a project to involve disengaged Indigenous youth, who have been assigned to the Thamarrurr Men’s Shed by the courts, in Landcare activities. The program will be delivered through the Wadeye Men’s Shed, in Wadeye in the Northern Territory.

In many communities of this region, there are high rates of disengagement amongst young people who may not be attending school or participating in other activities. This can lead to feelings of isolation, disconnection, and a lack of purpose, and can often play out in anti-social behaviour.

The project provides an opportunity for young people to be mentored by senior men and activity supervisors who can act as positive role models and provide guidance and support. This can be especially important for young people who may not have positive role models in their lives. It will provide a safe and supportive environment for young people to build new skills and develop a sense of accomplishment, foster their sense of belonging and purpose, and encourage their reconnection with their community, culture and country.



IMAGE: Geoff Bassett from Farm Mojo spoke to land managers about natural resources management at a sustainable farming field day convened by Gwymac in Inverell, NSW (2022 small grants recipient).

# PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS



## SEEDS OF CONNECTION

### Roma, Queensland

Our *Seeds of Connection* program is run by Mithaka woman Megan Brown, who is based in Roma, south east Queensland.

Sensing the changes in her community with the passing of significant Elders in recent years, Megan has felt compelled to create opportunities for the younger generations to come together and participate in cultural activities and practices out on Country. In 2023, this has included our two Healing and Belonging through Culture camps: the first, in March, for 32 Indigenous women and four children at the Yumba, a sacred site near Mitchell; the second, in July 2023, for 10 youth at Mt Moffat. The final program for 2023 is a Women's Earth and Healing Retreat in December, which includes the opportunity to reconnect on sacred land Nungeena, in the Glass House Mountains.

Each of these cultural programs involve story, language, food, art and craft skills and ceremony. Megan has seen a real shift in both the adults and children involved in these programs, as they discover pride and confidence in their own identity as Indigenous, and show signs of a strong sense of belonging.

Megan has also found a deep well of wisdom and opportunity for healing amongst the women of her local mobs. Megan has a great gift for creating emotionally safe experiences where women who have never had the opportunity to share with others before, find themselves comfortable enough to risk sharing their own personal stories. Most of these women have grown up in conditions where they were either physically separated from their family and

culture, or more broadly in a local environment that harshly discouraged their parents from speaking and sharing their Indigenous culture with their children. Where possible, Megan provides access to sacred sites so that the women can build relationship not only to each other, but to the land. This inherently impacts their own personal mental health and wellbeing, and creates possibilities for ongoing cultural support and community. Megan's own connection to Country has enabled her to connect well with Elders in nearby mobs, raising interest in extending these programs across south east Queensland, from Cunnamulla to the Sunshine Coast.

## FREE2b GIRLS

### St Helens, Tasmania

In 2023 we extended our support to our previous small grant recipient Free2b Girls to enable them to set up their organisation sufficiently to provide direct employment and training of facilitators to support teenage girls in need of a safe space "2b". As a result, they have been able to launch the *Free2b Time* program that allows local teenage girls in St Helen's, north east Tasmania, to receive individual and group support to navigate the challenges of living remotely.

The program allows local women to be trained and supported as facilitators to nurture young people in St Helens, who previously did not have the support to be themselves, discover what they want and have the confidence to ask for the help they need to get there.

*IMAGE: Participants of the Healing and Belonging through Culture Women's program at the Yumba in Mitchell Queensland in March 2023.*

Tani Langoulant, founder of Free2b Girls reports, “The young people in our area really need support that is self-determining, and we feel Highways and Byways understands this approach; we are inspired by stories we have heard of how the MSS have worked over the years, in particular of Sr Lorraine who worked in this very community. There is great value in the simple practice of caring and being present with people in need.”

Tani and her team have witnessed leaps and bounds in the girls’ confidence, self awareness, sense of direction and hope. The facilitators purposefully focus in on the strengths and interests of the girls, and for two of the girls, this includes fostering their self expression through their talent for art. For the most part however, the activities chosen by the girls are reflective of the challenges they face simply by being under 18 in a remote area; unable to drive, it’s unusual to have someone available to take them to the beach for a walk, or to encourage them out of the house and drive to a local café where they might be socialising for the first time in numerous weeks. What is key, is the safety of the relationship that develops, which enables the girls to discover what they want, and the courage to make the choices they need to get there.

Highways and Byways is pleased to run a program that actively builds community; training and

employing local women to facilitate growth, a sense of identity and of purpose in the younger women around them. It is a great investment in not only women, but their families and friends who all benefit from the support and upskilling of their community as a whole.

We are thankful to Mary MacKillop Today, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and Catholic Religious of Queensland who have all funded *Seeds of Connection* and *Free2b Time* programs this year.



MARY MACKILLOP  
*today*



**FRRR**  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal

## RESTORING NATURE AND COMMUNITIES

### St Helens, Tasmania

Highways and Byways continues its commitment to regenerating the land we are blessed to live on. As we learn from our First Nations people, we must restore our relationship to the land and remember we are part of it. Our program *Restoring Nature and Communities* with Todd Dudley in north east Tasmania is a unique program that practically demonstrates how to support the whole ecosystem; it provides training and employment to the local community, builds connection and understanding between people and the land, and restores land in ways that assist the land to heal itself (Assisted Natural Regeneration).

In 2023, Todd’s team have restored a further 100 hectares of forest primarily on the eastern coastal catchments of Skyline Tier including the high conservation value Diana’s Basin catchment. As the project progresses, some of their work will now focus on revisiting areas they have previously restored to ensure they remove any final pine weeds coming through. This follow up work takes much less time, but is crucial to avoid the pines taking over again as they would if left unattended.

The team continues to benefit mentally and physically from their work on the project as the restoration work offers very high levels of job satisfaction. Each week further progress can be seen and areas treated over



the past decade are a source of great pride to the crew.

The work of the MSS has always been grounded in relationships, and all of us involved with Highways and Byways are grateful to the Sisters for creating this legacy that insists we remain connected to those we work with, supporting them at a grass-roots level to create a reality that benefits the people in their relationship with each other and the Earth. As Pope Francis asserts,

*“all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family; ...our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together.”*

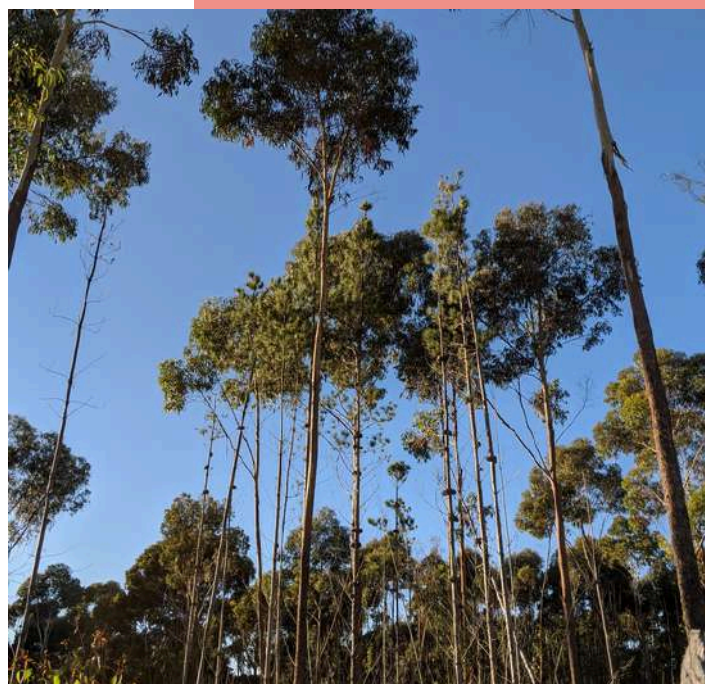
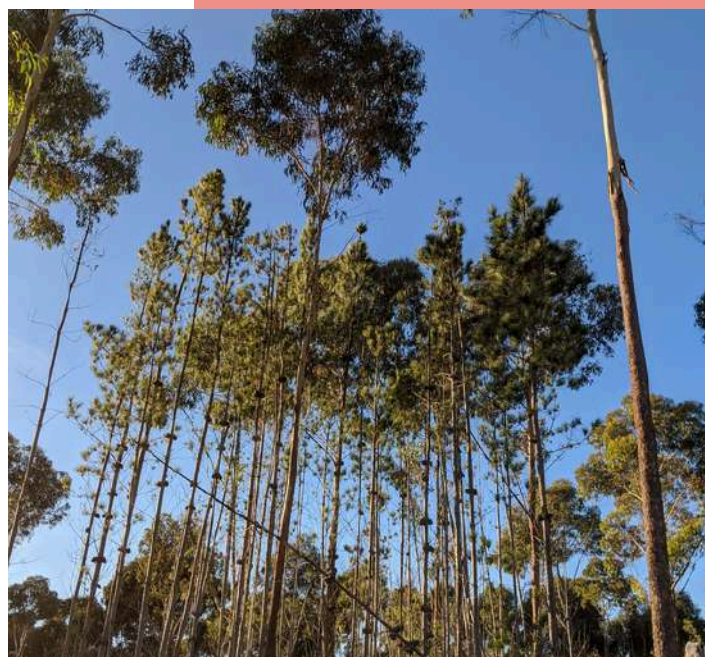
LAUDATO SI 2015 & LAUDATE DEUM 2023

Through our involvement with the Restoring Nature and Communities program, Highways and Byways is actively making a local response to the current ecological crisis. The impact of the program then stretches to across the country to our broader Highways and Byways community every time we talk about the program, raising awareness and ecological literacy across the many highways and byways where the MSS have made connections over the last 79 years.

*“there is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”*

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) SYNTHESIS REPORT SUMMARY FOR POLICYMAKERS 2023, P.24

*IMAGES: Before and after the removal of pine ‘weeds’.*



# EVENTS



## JOHN WALLIS WINTER WALK

Hobart's John Wallis Winter Walk – which honours Father John as a keen nature lover, walker, and photographer – is a delightful event to plan and a joyous one in which to participate.

On Saturday, 29 July 2023, a crisp and sunny day, more than 30 people and five dogs gathered with old friends and new at St John the Baptist Church, Glenorchy, before driving to the picturesque Montrose Bay foreshore for the walk. One hazard faced the walkers: an occasional cold spray from the Derwent River, whipped up by unexpectedly strong wind gusts. In the sunshine, no one seemed to mind. Those who stayed at the church were entertained and instructed by Dennis Derrick about the history of the church and parish, both strongly linked to the life and legacy of Fr John.

To end the day, everyone enjoyed a scrumptious afternoon tea. Eventually, the church foyer had to be prepared for Saturday evening Mass.

## JOHN WALLIS MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 2023 John Wallis Memorial Lecture featured keynote speaker Rev Dr Jake Mudge, who addressed the topic, *You are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood: living fully our shared baptismal calling*.

In his inspiring presentation, Jake highlighted the profound invitation of the Second Vatican Council to cultivate friendship with the living God, who meets us intimately and personally in our daily lives. He used

Dominican preacher Timothy Radcliffe's question of how we might "take the plunge" into our shared baptismal calling as heralds and prophets of the good news.

As a Corpus Christi Seminary staff member and Catholic Theological College lecturer, Jake assured listeners that seminary teachers knew Pope Francis' synodal church demanded radical new attitudes and skill sets from future priests. He spoke feelingly about the pitfalls of power relationships, stressing that the only truly authentic priest/laity interface must be vulnerability meeting vulnerability.

Forty-five people were in the room, and an estimated 150 + people heard the lecture through living streaming.

The annual lecture, which brings together a diverse gathering of the local Catholic community, celebrates and honours Fr John Wallis, the Missionary Sisters of Service, and Highways and Byways. It was held at Guilford Young College, Glenorchy Campus, on the afternoon of Saturday, 21 October 2023. It can be viewed via the News section of the Highways and Byways newsletter: [www.hb.org.au/news](http://www.hb.org.au/news).

## TOOWOOMBA MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 2023 Memorial Lecture showcased keynote speaker Rev Tim Costello AO who spoke on 'The Big Picture: Living in Hope and Awareness.'

Tim is a highly esteemed community and international leader renowned for his insights into social justice, leadership, and ethics.



In front of an audience of 115 people, Tim delivered a compelling message, emphasising the significance of embracing hope amidst the current challenges. He drew inspiration from the Parable of the Good Samaritan, paralleling the divisive choices made by the priest and Levite with choices facing us in current world affairs.

Sharing his firsthand experiences in the Middle East, Tim recounted instances of individuals prioritising humanity over racial, religious, and cultural differences, even amid political turmoil. He also reflected on the 2023 Referendum, urging the audience to focus on the strengths inherent in our communities. Notably, he highlighted that 22 out of Australia's 25 largest charities are Christian faith-based organisations.

The Memorial Lecture took place on Sunday, 21 October, at St. Theresa's Parish Centre in East Toowoomba. It is available for viewing through the News section of the Highways and Byways website at [www.hb.org.au/news](http://www.hb.org.au/news).

## YARCK TO YEA - WALK/RIDE/ RUN

We had a splendid day in the picturesque landscapes of country Victoria on Saturday, August 19 2023, during our annual Yarck to Yea - Walk/Ride/Run.

Many from our wider community joined us for the journey along the Great Victorian Rail Trail. As we traversed the path, we had the pleasure of forging new connections and exchanging tales of our experiences with the land, as well as our profound ties to the Missionary Sisters of Service.

Our heartfelt appreciation extends to the Yea Catholic parish community, whose warm reception awaited us at the conclusion of the event. Their generous hospitality included a barbecue and an array of delectable homemade treats, enhancing the camaraderie of the day.

Yea holds historical significance for Highways and Byways, being the birthplace of Father John Wallis, the founder of the Missionary Sisters of Service.



*IMAGE: Birds spotted along the Montrose Bay foreshore, the location for this year's John Wallis Winter Walk. Image courtesy of Penny Edman.*

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## 2022-2023

The 2023 financial year has been one of re-adjustment for Highways and Byways as we transitioned to an organisational structure separate from the Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS). Total comprehensive income for the year recorded a loss of \$200,000 and this resulted in a rundown of total assets of a similar amount as financial assets were sold to fund the deficit.

Revenue dropped by \$81,000, largely due to a reduction in Investment income. Investment income in 2021-22 had been boosted by the receipt of dividend imputation credits from completed tax assessments for prior years, but the reduction in the value of financial assets over 2021-22 also impacted negatively on dividend income. General revenue, derived from grants and donations declined by almost \$20,000.

Expenditure, made up largely of employment and administration costs and grants under our *Small Grants Program* and *Partnership Programs*, increased by \$42,000 (10%). Expenditure on the *Small Grants Program* and *Partnership Programs* was maintained at the 2021-22 level following a major increase of 52% in the previous year. The major expense increases were for employment expenses and administration expenses; this was due in part to transition costs resulting from separating Highways and Byways and MSS organisational structures.



The value of our financial assets was generally maintained, with just a minor upward revaluation.

This followed a significant decline in the previous year as a result of a major correction in the Australian share market where our securities are held. The significantly lower end-of-year financial assets value has the potential to reduce investment income going forward.

Key financial outcomes in 2022-23 were as follows:

(a) Total income dropped by \$81,238 (-25%), with Revenue declining by \$19,814 (-%12) and Investment income falling by \$61,424 (-%25).

(b) Total expenditure increased by \$41,863 (10%). The major drivers of this were increased expenditure on Employment expenses (up \$22,304) and Administration expenses (up \$20,212).

(c) Net assets decreased by \$200,415 (-12%). Current assets were reduced by \$93,356 (-48.8%) while Non-current assets dropped by \$101,456 (-15.7%). Total liabilities increased by \$5,603 (12.7%).

Jeffery Byrne  
Chair – Administration and Finance Committee

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER  
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	147,036	166,850
Investment income	94,500	155,924
Employee benefits expense	(185,971)	(163,677)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(3,767)	(2,753)
Grants and programs expenses	(194,338)	(194,270)
Administration expenses	(64,067)	(43,855)
Insurance expenses	(4,099)	(5,834)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>(210,706)</b>	<b>(87,605)</b>
<b>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</b>		
Revaluation gain/(loss) for financial assets held as FVOCI	10,291	(318,566)
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>10,291</b>	<b>(318,566)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>(200,415)</b>	<b>(406,181)</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	59,524	132,566
Trade and other receivables	30,667	52,362
Other assets	7,741	6,360
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	97,932	191,288
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Other financial assets	1,299,320	1,398,778
Property, plant and equipment	3,637	4,735
Intangible assets	1,275	2,175
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	1,304,232	1,405,688
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	1,596,976	1,596,976
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	24,727	13,424
Employee benefits	9,043	25,279
Other liabilities	11,000	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	44,770	38,703
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Employee benefits	4,846	5,310
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	4,846	5,310
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	49,616	44,013
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	1,352,548	1,552,963
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Reserves	(163,949)	(160,481)
Retained earnings	1,516,497	1,713,444
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	1,352,548	1,552,963

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# GOVERNANCE - OUR BOARD



## MARG CASEY

**Chairperson / Director / Projects Committee / Finance and Administration Committee / Mission Integration Committee**

Marg Casey has a background in parish and school administration, vocations ministry at state and national levels, health ethics, social services and homelessness. She has worked in Church organisations, as an administrator, editor, executive director and volunteer program co-ordinator to name a few.



## MARTIN ALLEN

**Director / Chair Communications and Fundraising Committee**

Martin has a wealth of business experience implementing solutions for national and global clients. His roles have included senior client relationships, contract negotiation, business development and technology innovation and implementation.



## JEFF BYRNE

**Director / Treasurer / Chair Finance and Administration Committee / Communications and Fundraising Committee**

Jeff is a qualified Company Director with extensive experience in government board roles. He has a background in public sector leadership, organisation governance and risk management.



## BERNADETTE HOGAN

**Director / Chair Projects Committee / Finance and Administration Committee**

Bernadette lives in Birchip, rural Victoria and has taken on many executive roles in local and regional organisations including serving as a Shire Councillor. She is passionate about supporting small regional communities towards strength and resilience and sees very real opportunities for Australian farming communities to lead the way in developing and promoting sustainable, climate-friendly solutions and practices.

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### **BERNADETTE MADDEN mss**

#### **Director / Projects Committee / Mission Integration Committee**

Bernadette has worked as a social worker and teacher across Australia. She has worked in Indigenous communities in various rural regions and in community services organisations assisting vulnerable families.



### **ALICIA DEAK**

#### **Director / Chair Mission Integration Committee**

Alicia Deak has a background in teaching, educational leadership – at both secondary and tertiary levels – and theology. Working in Catholic education, she has held roles in areas of social justice, identity, mission, formation and pastoral care. She is currently the Dean of Newman College at the University of Melbourne.



### **CHERYLE ROYLE**

#### **Director / Projects Committee / Mission Integration Committee**

Cheryle has an extensive background in healthcare management having been the CEO of a number of hospitals in Victoria. Prior to retiring/semi-retiring Cheryle was the CEO of St Vincent's Hospital Brisbane. She has served on a number of Boards throughout her career including a National Board, local Government Boards and Health Services in Rural Victoria.



### **HELEN CASEY**

#### **Director / Finance and Administration Committee**

Helen has an extensive background in the healthcare industry, most recently focused on operational strategy and transformation with responsibility for Asia Pacific. Prior to this Helen worked in increasingly senior finance, M&A and project management roles. She has worked and lived across 5 different continents and has experience in both established and emerging markets. Helen is an experienced Not-For-Profit board member.



### **STANCEA VICHIE mss**

#### **Congregational Leader**

Stancea is a member of the MSS Stewardship Council and is currently the Congregational Leader of the Missionary Sisters of Service. She has worked amongst people from many different cultures and backgrounds in urban, rural and outback regions of Australia, as well as periods in other countries. Her work has included pastoral work, leadership formation, human rights advocacy, asylum seeker communities, and working towards the elimination of human trafficking.

## OUR PATRONS

Highways and Byways is fortunate to have the support of five patrons who encourage and champion our mission and objectives.

We thank them for their continued patronage throughout 2023.



**CLARE MCSHANE**

Tasmania



**MARY WAGNER AM**

Queensland



**BISHOP PAT POWER**

Australian Capital Territory



**BISHOP BILL MORRIS**

Queensland



**DENIS FITZGERALD**

Victoria

## OUR STAFF

Highways and Byways is supported by a dedicated and passionate management and administrative team. In 2023 we welcomed Megan Brown to our staff. As well as running our flourishing *Seeds of*

*Connection* program in Roma, south east Queensland, it has been wonderful to have a First Nations woman of such strength and vision join the Highways and Byways team.



**JANE COLLOPY**

Executive Officer



**MARNIE WYLDE**

Manager Grants & Communications



**MEGAN BROWN**

Seeds of Connection Program Manager



## HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS - HEALING THE LAND, HEALING OURSELVES, TOGETHER



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highways-and-byways



@HighwaysByways1

*IMAGE: A restored creek Skyline Tier in Tasmania, achieved as a result of our Restoring Nature and Communities project.*



**Highways  
and Byways**

HEALING THE LAND.  
HEALING OURSELVES.  
TOGETHER.