

2016 - 2017

# ANNUAL REPORT

• PALMS AUSTRALIA •



A photograph of two men in conversation. The man on the left has grey hair and glasses, wearing a black turtleneck. The man on the right has dark hair and is wearing a light green button-down shirt with a red lanyard. They are in a room with other people in the background and a large orange and white patterned object on the right.

# from the president

This will be my last report as Palms Board President. It has been an honour and a privilege to be involved with such a special organisation as Palms. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow directors on the Board and especially the wonderful team of Palms staff, office volunteers and interns that Roger has gathered around him. I am continually inspired by their tireless work and dedication. I would also like to thank our patrons, members, partner organisations and especially our donors for their ongoing support and commitment, which ultimately enables the good work of Palms to continue. Finally, I acknowledge and sincerely thank our Palms participants who are currently working overseas, as they are the ‘action’ in our vision – to see people cooperating across cultures in order to help achieve a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world free of poverty.

In my last Presidents Report I stressed two of the main challenges facing Palms as we move forward – namely the difficulty in recruiting good people who are willing to give two years of their life to volunteer and work overseas – and secondly, the difficult financial situation Palms has been in, relying on donations, without government or institutional church support, in an ever-competitive environment vying for the ‘charity dollar’, I think we have made definite progress in meeting these challenges.

We are delighted to welcome an extra staff member Rachel Lee, who will be responsible for Marketing and Communications. This is an active step to build the profile of Palms in the general community in effort to arrest and reverse the declining number of volunteers that Palms places. It will also allow other staff to focus on recruitment both within Church circles and in the broader community. We have also recently completely revamped the Palms website, which will be the face of Palms for many into the future. It is simple, engaging and effective site that I encourage you to visit. I am sure you will be impressed, and we greatly acknowledge and thank all those who volunteered to make this new platform a reality.

The real concerns about ongoing budget deficits have been somewhat relieved, with a Partnership Agreement with Catholic Mission providing some extra funds and the ongoing strategies to grow our donor base and commitment levels showing promise into the future.

This year Palms has been blessed by an extraordinary monetary donation. As fellow director Brendan Joyce has said, “this gift is a credit to Palms and the relationships the organisation cherishes, to the individual who is willing to make such a contribution and to Roger, Christine and all the Palms staff and volunteers who keep these relationships and the vision and mission alive in the hearts of so many”. I think it also shows that people who really know and understand what Palms does in the world are inspired to support the organisation in many ways over and above what is considered ‘normal’.

I know that I have focused on problems and responses in my report so far, which are important, but it is not what should define us. To focus entirely on action and outcomes, no matter how compassionate, can lead to burn out and cynicism. I believe action needs to be sustained by a contemplative inner strength. *“Bringing a contemplative stance to a life of compassionate action allows justice to flow naturally ...from a place of grace. ... In contemplation we move beyond language to experience God as Mystery...In our best dream, Grace itself does the work, guides our hands and our hearts, motivates our choices. We ... realise that everything is a gift”*(1). This idea is expressed most beautifully in the following poem by Michael Leunig (2). I think it also relates very specially to Palms philosophy of opening our hands to the world, hopefully balanced with a spirit of trusting acceptance and humility.

“ Dear God,  
We loosen our grip.  
We open our hand.  
We are accepting.  
In our empty hand  
We feel the shape  
Of simple eternity.  
It nestles there.  
We hold it gently.  
We are accepting.  
Amen.”



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Antony Faa'.

Dr Antony Faa  
President

1. Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, NM 87195, USA, Website <https://cac.org/>

2. A Common Prayer, Michael Leunig, Collins Dove, 1990.



# from the director

The Financial Year in Palms office began in Glebe and finished in Petersham, although 25% of staff effort came from Melbourne. Returned volunteers and others in Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Ballarat and Newcastle, gave great assistance. Of course the work we support is being done by volunteers with communities in Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Samoa, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Timor Leste, and on the Thai-Myanmar border.

## **Volunteer Value, Beyond Capacity Building**

I'm reminded of a year when AusAID wanted us to add the value of the volunteers to our accounts. They had come up with a funding process whereby future allocations would be made according to our Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE), but as a volunteer agency we didn't send funds, so we were asked to count the value of the volunteers' forgone income in Australia. This was their donation and as such counted as income, which when expended across the period of their placement overseas would be our RDE.

If used in the last year it would have added over \$1.5m to both sides of the ledger. This may help to appreciate the value of volunteers, however it only really accounts for their hours at work. Antony Gittins reminds us that a *priceless gift a stranger can bring to a needy community is the moral gift of solidarity*. And beyond their **work** volunteers and returned volunteers helped again this year to educate Australian communities, increasing their awareness and enthusiasm to encourage, just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful development across the globe.

## **Gifted into Planning for a Sustainable Future**

Looking at the actual figures tells you that we had significantly more income than expenditure in 2016-17, an unusual occurrence in recent years. In our enthusiasm to meet the many requests for volunteers we have contracted our reserves a little each year for a number of years now. However, we received a wonderful legacy in June, which will allow us to invest in organisational capacity and enable us to sustainably recruit more volunteers into the future.

The board has agreed to a seven year plan in two stages. The first 2018–2020 will focus on building profile and improving our ability to find the volunteers that communities are requesting to assist build their capacity. As you read this a Marketing and Communications Strategist, Rachel Lee, is in her first days at the Sydney office. I will be asking Rachel to engage members in the development of the strategies and implementation plans, especially at Palms 2018 Organisational Review.

Evaluation of stage one will inform detailed planning for stage two. The broad goal for 2021–24 will be to take advantage of three years of profile building to develop additional sustainable sources of income. This will work if in building Palms' profile we are careful to develop healthy relationships with individuals, organisations and communities who share our values.

### **Clarifying Values for Healthy Partnerships**

At a recent board meeting our chairman, Antony Faa, made the point that the legacy Palms received in June, the many other great donations we receive and partnerships we enjoy, are due to the way we embrace people with understanding, acceptance and care. However, we also learnt this year that not all who we engage in partnership have this approach as their focus. There are still hierarchical organisations operating on a "power over" rather than "growing together" model. Such a culture legitimises ignoring the strengths of a smaller organisational partner to impose pet agendas, or limited single models of development.

My studies of organisational leadership some 20 years ago suggested larger organisations were developing smaller, less hierarchical, more innovative cells because it encouraged a more open, caring culture that was operationally more effective. If we are to grow together in justice, love and humility with larger organisations, we first need to ensure that this is the inclusive and transparent culture by which they operate internally.

Fortunately in 2016–17, it is again the authentic relationships of mutual development that fortify us rather than any difficult relationship demoralising us. Partners in global communities, Australian organisations and community groups, our members, donors, and all the volunteers and staff, have collaborated humbly to encourage love and build just processes. All of us continue bringing Palms together to give our world a culture of great hope.



Roger O'Halloran  
Director



# Palms Australia Volunteer Placements 2016–2017



23 organisations &  
communities



26 professional and  
skilled volunteers



6,189 days of  
work/mentoring

During July 2016 – June 2017 Palms Australia has worked in partnership for development with **23 organisations and communities**, across Timor -Leste, Thailand, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Kenya and South Africa. **26 professional and skilled volunteers** have assisted to facilitate partner development, with **6,189 days of work/mentoring** in education, health and organisational and community development.

# Partnership increasing Educational Access and Opportunities

Fourteen primary and secondary school teachers have worked with twelve partner organisations across six countries over 3,054 days and have achieved:

- principals trained in school administration/professional development,
- local teachers supported in educational pedagogy, curriculum development and implementation within pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education,
- library staff trained to improve student access to educational resources and
- refugee tertiary students tutored and supported with an online Diploma course.



Students at the Don Bosco College & Vocational Technical Centre, Samoa





Margaret Cassidy (Palms Volunteer/Pre School Teacher) & Sr Imelda (PreSchool Director)

**Feedback from Sr Imelda (Director of Bedois Parish Pre-School) about Margaret Cassidy, Palms Volunteer/Pre-School Educator who is providing mentoring and training of pre-school staff.**

*...we're so grateful to have Margaret with us. Our skills and knowledge in teaching the little children are improving day by day as Margaret continues sharing her experience and knowledge with us. She is so patient with us and to the children, as a matter of fact, her partner in the class, Miss Juliana, is now doing well after several months working with her. Now Juliana knows how to make a class program and activities for her class.*

*Margaret is not just our co-teacher in the school but also we look on her as our mentor because Margaret is also giving us an ongoing training in childhood care and development so we will be able to understand the psychology of our children under our responsibility and so be able to create activities that suit their age learning.*  
Sr. Imelda (June, 2017)

According to Margaret as her relationship with Sr Imelda has developed, she is able to answer questions and engage in discussion about Early Childhood Education.

*... On a daily basis we talk about issues arising in health, child protection, programming, involving families in programmes resources, appropriate practice and child development.*

Margaret has conducted three formal workshops on child development, routine and programming and teaching environments with staff and is planning another eight sessions over the coming months.





# Strengthening Individual and Organisational Capacity

Ten volunteer placements providing 2,646 days of training and mentoring in collaboration with ten partners to assist building individual and organisational capacity in administration, finance and community development programs. Volunteers in Kiribati, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea, through their work with diocesan and local NGO staff have:

- facilitated the provision of awareness raising programs (domestic violence, gender, climate change, food security) across rural and outer island communities,
- implemented systems and processes for financial management/reporting (accounting systems and software training),
- supported eco-tourism social enterprise projects,
- introduced HR and business management for income generating projects,
- developed policy, procedures and sustainable strategic planning processes, and
- Built alliances/partnerships that will continue to facilitate funding links and opportunities.



From left to right Sela (finance staff), Simon (finance committee secretary), Fr. Sebastian (parish priest of Suai), Grinaldo (pastoral committee chairperson), Citi dos Santos.

# Diocese of Maliana, Timor Leste

**Some words from Citi dos Santos Sequeira – Head Accounts Officer with the Diocese of Maliana about Dianne Hanna, Palms Volunteer/Accountant who is providing training and mentoring of Diocesan Admin and Finance staff within the Diocese and across all parishes.**

*...First of all I would like to say thank you to Palms Australia, who have allowed Dianne Hanna to come to East Timor specifically to work with the Diocese of Maliana. I am very, very happy with the arrival of Dianne at the Diocese of Maliana. She is very helpful to us in every way for example she has taught me how to lead meetings and how to train people. She has also taught me how to collect information to make a report.*

*I had never had any confidence before but with Diana's encouragement and support I now feel more confident. Now I feel that all the work is easier to do even if only by myself thanks to Dianne's hard work teaching me.*

I am very grateful to Dianne Hanna and also to Palms Australia. She is a volunteer and is very


patient in every way. Sometimes when we visit a parish we do not get the place we expect but she never gives up.

*Thank you for your cooperation and I hope there will be more volunteers coming to help us learn new skills. (26th July, 2017)*

**Dianne wrote:** The picture above was the third visit on our May parish visits and after observing the first two and some debrief and preparation on the way to Suai from our previous destination, Zumalai Citi confidently held the meeting and I sat in the background taking the photo.

The meeting is the first of many meetings we will have with each parish as part of the diocesan plans to implement financial systems and regular reporting processes in each of the parishes. In this meeting Citi was able to identify the current processes in place, the key people involved, the resources available and communicate and request the information that we needed to take back with us in order to plan our next visit.





This picture was taken after the initial meeting was conducted. Citi is working with Father Manuel to review the financial records identified in the meeting. Then clarify the information with him for us so we could take it back to the office and then proceed to the next step of the diocesan plan. It lead to implementation of financial systems and regular reporting processes in each of the parishes.

- Dianne Hanna



# Health Care Outreach and Health Worker Training

One volunteer health placement over 365 days in South Africa focused on and achieved:

- ongoing training for staff both onsite and externally in areas of child care behaviour management, healthcare and administration,
- clinic – HIV/AIDS education for the auxiliary nurses expanded to include a greater critical analysis of health and medication regimes and
- outreach services support expanded to children on holiday leave and children permanently reunited with family.







## Holy Family Care Centre, Ofcolaco, South Africa

Debra is the full-time auxiliary nurse at Holy Family Care Centre who works alongside and is trained by Carmel. Holy Family is an invaluable accommodation facility set up and supported by the OLSH Sisters for young vulnerable children who have been removed by the courts as a last resort. Of the 66 children at Holy Family, 33% are living with HIV/AIDS.

The Centre provides clinical care and education programs for pre-school, primary and secondary school students. Carmel has been working alongside the clinic staff, linking in with the local village clinic providing ongoing support and health education for all in care.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## Palms Orientation 2017

Breaking with the recent tradition of a southern highlands location, the 98th Palms Orientation Course took place at Peter Canisius House in the Sydney suburb of Pymble. Despite the mid-January temperature, the 9-day workshop surrounded by peaceful gardens and remnant bushland allowed participants to bond as a community: sharing, reflecting, absorbing and creating a Palms Orientation very much their own.

A highlight this year was the participation of experienced returned volunteers preparing for new placements. Helena Charlesworth, Margaret and Peter Cassidy, and Jane Banfield exchanged field wisdom and insights during the sessions on health, language, personality and security. Just as valuable



in this exchange was the life experience of new recruits Ann McVey, Liz Keating and Julie Attwood.

The collective wisdom of this new community, combined with that of Palms staff and guest presenters, ensured that the course again developed in organic, exciting and adventurous ways- even when covering familiar ground.

Such a successful and engaging course would not be possible without our guest presenters giving freely their time and knowledge. Sincere thanks to Peter Fletcher, Luke Tobin, Brendan Joyce, Cheree Flanagan, Richard Harris and Guida Cabrita. Special thanks too to the tireless staff of Peter Canisius House for their hospitality, and very special thanks to Fathers Henry, Thomas and Peter for their spiritual guidance.





## Timor Leste Encounters

Returnee volunteer Sam Haddin led our Encounter to Timor Leste in July 2016. Drawing together a group of individual participants, some of whom were discerning future volunteer options, the 13 day encounter was a first engagement with Timor Leste, Palms volunteers and host communities. It provided yet another opportunity to realize Palms' mission of raising the awareness and enthusiasm of Australian communities. Raising awareness of life for our nearest neighbours prompts us to question our own choices as one participant remarked- *It was great. I am just not too sure where to go from here. But I am reflecting on it.*

Continuing Palms' partnership with Australian Catholic University (ACU), seven students of International Development took the 28-day Encounter in May/June, 2017. Led by returnee Pollyanna Forshaw, the expanded itinerary formed a practical component of their studies. With assigned Key Learning Objectives by ACU, the participants were able to respond to issues of development and assess various approaches through witnessing real-world situations outside the text-books. Pollyanna remarks that the students rapidly gained an appreciation and respect for the local people and culture. They were *able to assess situations and see ways of engaging with the Timorese which affirmed their autonomy and dignity*. This Encounter again fulfilled Palms' mission and ACU's aims of "recognising and respecting alternate world views while empathising with communities in developing countries"



The success of these Encounters would not be possible without the hospitality of Timorese host communities and co-operation of the volunteers in placement. Thanks to all for opening their hands, hearts and homes to the participants. Much appreciation also to our tireless guides Sam and Polly. As always, a big thank-you to Barry, our In-Country Co-ordinator for wisdom, hospitality and reality checks.

## Returnee Clusters

True to the aims of the Paulian Association, this year Palms supported the formation of Returnee Clusters. These are semi-formal groups of returned Palms volunteers, members and supporters organised by diocese and region who meet to discuss issues of social justice and promote activities supporting Palms' mission within their respective communities or parishes.

Palms enlisted the enthusiastic Colleen Malone (volunteered in Kavieng, PNG) in September to contact Palms returnees across the country and co-ordinate formation of groups. With an equally enthusiastic response, the inaugural cluster gathering (and barbecue!) was held at Colleen's home on 16 October, followed by a clustering of Parramatta Diocese returnees in November. Since then, the Palms clusters across the country have also become key local contacts and support for new volunteer recruits prior to heading overseas. Their regular (and irregular!) gatherings fulfil our first mission of advancing the awareness and enthusiasm of communities in shared action for justice and peace.







### **Palms Polycultural Pentecost Parties**

On the feast of Pentecost, recalling the Disciples were inspired to speak in other languages and identify in solidarity with “the other”, Palms encouraged supporters to hold a Polycultural Pentecostal Party in their communities. With clever alliteration, these became exciting and fun expressions of our diversity and solidarity. Multicultural dishes and themes were naturally the flavour on a day most appropriate to celebrate Palms values.

# Palms Board of Directors



**Dr Antony Faa**

Director since October 2011  
Appointed President in October 2014

Senior Medical Officer at Warwick Hospital and former Palms volunteer in Manus Province PNG



**Roger O'Halloran**

Director since November 2001

Executive Director at Palms Australia and former Palms volunteer in Western Samoa



**Fr Thomas McDonough CP**

Director since February 2015

Passionists Provincial Superior, Holy Spirit Province; and the Vice President of the Catholic Religious Australia National Council



**Prof Marea Nicholson**

Director since October 2014

Associate Vice Chancellor, Australian Catholic University, Council Member, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta Schools Council, Member of NSW Catholic Education Committee Education Policy Committee



**Ivapene Seiuli**

Director since October 2011

Worked with AusAID in Samoa, former Palms Program Co-ordinator (Sydney) and Palms In-Country Manager (PNG). Current Palms In-Country Manager (Samoa)



**Kristina Gunawan**

Director and Treasurer since October 2014

CPA Accountant with extensive financial and management experience, and former Palms volunteer in Timor Leste



**Peter Smyth**

Director since October 2014

Lawyer and former Palms volunteer as legal counsel to Divine Word University in Madang, PNG



**Brendan Joyce**

Director since October 2014

Digital Strategist Lead for Caritas Australia, former Palms Assistant Director and Director at Mercy Works Inc. Former Palms volunteer in Bougainville, PNG



**Bishop Eugene Hurley**

Director since October 2014

Bishop, Port Pirie Diocese 1998-2007  
Bishop, Darwin Diocese 2007-, Chairman, Bishops Commission for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders





# Financial Statement

PALMS AUSTRALIA		
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017		
<u>REVENUE</u>	2017	2016
Donations and Gifts	964,758	234,611
Grants	96,081	58,680
Investment Income	20,100	21,546
Other Income	<u>86,710</u>	<u>96,896</u>
<u>TOTAL REVENUE</u>	<u>1,167,649</u>	<u>411,733</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Palms Overseas Programs	330,721	362,334
Community Education	70,788	63,968
Fundraising costs	1,096	5,342
Accountability and administration	70,421	69,116
Domestic Programs Expenditure	2,971	2,794
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>475,997</u>	<u>503,554</u>
<u>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</u>	691,652	(91,821)
<u>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</u>		
Gain on revaluation of investments	3,022	2,360
<u>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</u>	694,674	(89,461)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
AS AT 30 JUNE, 2017		
<u>ASSETS</u>	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents	34,985	85,169
Trade and other receivables	2,539	4,219
Other financial assets	1,582,205	789,988
Property, plant and equipment	16,510	19,188
Other assets	<u>26,102</u>	<u>17,145</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>1,662,341</u>	<u>915,709</u>
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
Trade and other payables	112,359	92,522
Employee benefits	87,395	81,453
Deferred income	<u>46,579</u>	<u>20,400</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	<u>246,333</u>	<u>194,375</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	<u>1,416,008</u>	<u>721,334</u>
<u>EQUITY</u>		
Reserves	14,797	11,775
Retained earnings	<u>1,401,211</u>	<u>709,559</u>
<u>TOTAL EQUITY</u>	<u>1,416,008</u>	<u>721,334</u>

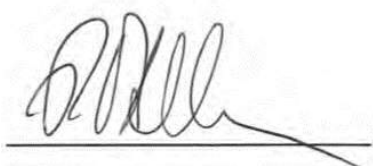
Please note: The information on pages 18 and 19 was extracted from the financial statements of Palms Australia for the year ended 30 June, 2017. A complete set of financial statements and Independent Audit Report are available upon request.

# Directors' Declaration

The directors of the Company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 3 to 19, are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 and:
  - a. comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements; and
  - b. give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the Company.
2. In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



Roger O'Halloran, Director



Brendan Joyce, Director

Wednesday, 13 September 2017



### **Discussions with stakeholders from varying perspectives assists to develop clear objectives.**

This meeting in May 2017 discussed the Maliana Education Foundation's (Fundação Sagrado Coração de Jesus Maliana) requests for Palms volunteer teachers and HR/Finance personnel. Foundation Director, Fr. Natalino and his staff, as well as Godwin Yidana (Catholic Mission Programs Coordinator) attended with Roger O'Halloran (Palms Executive Director), Barry Hinton (Palms In-Country Coordinator) and Dianne Hanna (Palms Volunteer), currently assisting with finance and management at Maliana Diocese. Dianne has also been helping the Foundation to develop sound financial processes.



Cover: Women of Bobonaro District, Timor Leste.

Palms volunteers have supported local women's and agricultural groups in the rural districts of Timor since 2001

**Palms Australia**  
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**ABN: 33 001 882 337**

Palms Australia is a public company (ACN 001 882 337) limited by guarantee whose legal structure is voluntary, not-for-profit and non-government. We are committed to living up to our values in all that we do. We value honest feedback, or any critique you might have about the way our team have implemented the Palms program.

If necessary our Executive Director or President can be contacted in confidence, using our secure web form located at <http://www.palms.org.au/about/contact-us/>.