



Palms Australia

# ANNUAL REPORT

2017 - 2018





PO Box 3109, Petersham North NSW 2049

Ph: (02) 9560 5333 | [palms@palms.org.au](mailto:palms@palms.org.au) | [www.palms.org.au](http://www.palms.org.au)  
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 may have about the way our team have implemented our program.

Palms' Executive Director or President can be contacted in confidence, at <http://www.palms.org.au/about/contact-us/>

## Contents

From the Chair	4
From the Executive Director	6
2017/18 Snapshot	9
Programs and Placements Report	10
Community Engagement	14
Financial Report	16
Declaration	17
Board of Directors	18
What's Happening	19



Over the past twelve months our key focus has been addressing the challenges identified by last year's Board Chair, namely "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'." (Antony Faa Annual Report 2016-2017).

To progress our response the Board has established two sub-committees. Our Vision and Strategy Committee, chaired by Brendan Joyce, has been convened to advance Palms' community engagement by considering ideas and recommendations, and overseeing the implementation of income development, volunteer recruitment and education strategies which are congruent with Palms' values and ethos.

Our Finance and Risk Committee, chaired by Kristina Gunawan, monitors financial reports and potential risks, ensuring that the use of Palms Australia's resources is consistent in practice with ethical, social and environmental codes of conduct.

To guide the strategic work of the Board and the sub-committees, a Sustainability Plan has been established with the goal that by 2023-24, Palms Australia is an economically sustainable provider of preparation for cross-cultural engagement, particularly for those who volunteer to assist community organisations seeking to build on the strengths of their people and processes to achieve sustainable poverty reduction.

I am grateful for Brendan and Kristina's leadership of these two important sub-committees as we work strategically and responsibly to achieve our goal. My appreciation also for our other dedicated directors, Bishop Vincent Long, Jane Woolford, Alex Varley, Antony Faa and Peter Smyth. Their



commitment to the Palms Australia vision, their encouragement and support for Palms staff, as well as their discernment of the challenging contextual issues is critical to ensuring Palms Australia's sustainability.

Finally, on behalf of the Board I acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Roger O'Halloran, Executive Director, and the Palms Australia staff to the development, promotion and delivery of the various components of our programs, in particular the preparation, placement and support of our volunteers.

Our 2017-2018 report will again provide inspiring examples of the many ways our volunteers assist diverse communities to build on strengths in mutually respectful encounters, and work toward shared goals to enhance capacity. This report provides an opportunity to forecast strategies and directions that inform both governance and operational responsibilities. However, it also is an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our staff, volunteers, partners and communities. Congratulations, and thank you all for your generous contributions.

Professor Marea Nicholson  
Chair, Palms Australia





from the Director

## A Mission centered on Vision

In the past financial year we have begun to plan and implement strategies for a more sustainable development of Palms program over a seven year period. Year One of Palms Sustainability Plan was busy with many moving parts in the form of new staff and ideas. Fresh approaches to achieve our development mission required adjustment. Challenges continued to be engaged by keeping Palms' vision at the centre.

### Investment in growth to address a persistent challenge

My 2016-17 report highlighted the wonderful legacy received in June 2017. Not since AusAID supported our program have we seen our revenue so inflated. AusAID funds (2011-13) were spent as obliged on an immediate expansion of assignments over 18 months, followed unfortunately, by an immediate contraction. Now we can invest in growing our capacity sustainably.

No doubt there will be adjustments to make along the way, but by 2023-4 we are aiming to have six to seven full-time staff maintaining 50 assignments with a balanced budget. For 2017-18 it was our aim to support 20 assignments while beginning to invest in new staff and resources. As you see in the Programs and Placements report, 23 assignments were supported, however the number of day of service given was down on 2016-17 figures.

The drop in days of service characterizes a disquieting, persistent slowing in the number of Australians offering their service to Palms core mission. This has occurred despite the strength of an

intelligent, versatile and strategic team trialling many innovative recruitment options. Member SWOT analyses suggested that more investment would be required to elevate our brand, our vision and values above external threats such as competition and guilt by association.

Within the church network small niches have been carved out by groups coveting an own-your-own international volunteer program. Instead of accepting the challenges and rich benefits of collaboration, particularly in formation and support, duplicate micro programs have fractured an economy of scale and opportunities for growing together. Connection to a fractured church in the wake of paedophilia also adds to the recruitment challenge.

The growth of dubious for-profit voluntourism likewise has created both competition and guilt by association. These companies target well-meaning, time-poor travellers with short-term quick fixes for our “developed” world wealth-guilt and community poverty, but add nothing to sustainable development and little to healthy mutual relationships. This adds to our necessity to invest in building a brand awareness that elevates Palms alternative vision, values and approach to international volunteering.

## Investing in the structure

By September 2017, just three months after the funds gave us the confidence to implement our plan we restructured and slightly increased staffing. This allowed the employment of our first full-time Marketing and Communications Strategist and the development of a position to better engage Palms network. Soon after we had a new web site, a daily, rather than ad hoc, digital media presence, and by June 2018 our branding had evolved.

Over the next six years further investment in our organisational structure will be reflected in deficits amounting to the expenditure of most of the \$780,000 we received in June 2017. In 2019-20 a fundraising and relationship manager will be employed to build on improved brand awareness and get us to a balanced budget in the final year of the plan.

## Measuring Outcomes

The steady staff growth in the pipeline needs to build Palms capacity to achieve targets. A measure of success will be our ability to fill assignment requests that effectively mentor counterparts, who ultimately stimulate endogenous developments that bring sustainable benefits to communities and their organisations. Such results will take time to appear as we test new approaches and learn to make the most of our new reality.

Numbers will assist to measure these tangible outcomes, but as I induct new staff I am called to get them past the idea that we just want to be as good as even the best of the other Volunteer Sending Organisations (VSO's). Palms expects more than good systems and quantitative evaluations. Achieving the mission without living and advancing the vision is analogous to the cliché about the richness of the journey being lost in the quest to get to the destination.

The best VSO's hark back to the best traditions of volunteer sending, but these days by contrast seem more concerned to help the people they send with another developed world malaise: an avoidance of vulnerability. Excessive payments provided to “Volunteers” enable the continuation

of a “privileged” material lifestyle while on assignment. If this is deemed necessary to recruit “volunteers” it really does suggest that the mission of volunteer sending has become an end in itself that needs to be re-examined.

I cherish the interdependence and solidarity epitomised in Palms vision and fulfilled in living it out. A big income on assignment puts one above local counterparts that undermines it. Indeed attempting to remove the challenge of vulnerability probably adds to one’s wealth-guilt; community poverty and the feeling of being time-poor.

Supporting Australians in assignments abroad can and should be a mission that stimulates opportunities for measurable material development that for the majority of people in our world can be hard to secure otherwise. If we do it with a higher vision it also is an opportunity for all to reach beyond cultural, religious, national, gender, class and individual barriers to cooperate in achieving a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world free of poverty.

Roger O’Halloran  
Executive Director, Palms Australia





# Palms 2017/18 Snapshot

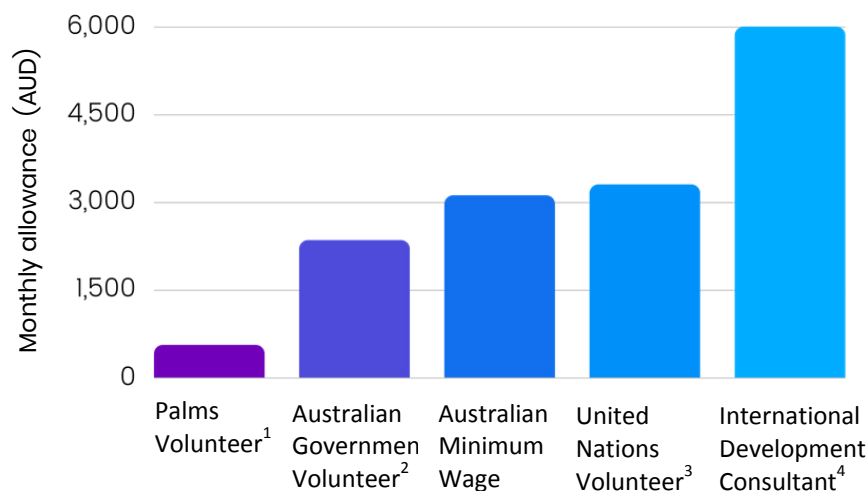
In the 2017/18 FY, Palms placed 23 Australians across 15 organisations in 7 countries.



Together, they provided 5,179 days of assistance to their host community.  
That's 14 days, everyday.

## How do we compare?

Long-term international volunteering is the most effective form of aid and Palms Australia operates one of the most cost effective international volunteering programs in our region. See below how a Palms volunteer compares to other international development workers.



1. Average monthly allowance paid to Palms volunteers in Timor Leste in 2017/18. Note: accommodation is provided by the partner organisation and participants are not required to pay rent.
2. Monthly allowance for a participant in the Australian Volunteer program based in Dili, Timor Leste. Excludes dependant allowance and additional benefits.
3. Monthly allowance for a UN Volunteer calculated on base living allowance and post adjustment multiplier for Timor Leste. Excludes dependant allowance and additional benefits.
4. Consultant rates vary based on experience and can exceed \$15,000 p/m. This estimate is based on an international consultant at a rate of \$40 per hour. Note: figures for AVp, UNV, and consultancies exclude additional benefits such as settlement and resettlement allowances, insurance, and dependant allowances.

# Programs and Placements

Palms again focused on placing qualified and experienced Australians to build on the strengths of locally driven programs in regional areas where other aid and development programs are often scarce. We prepared and supported 23 Australians who gave 5179 days, across 7 countries (Timor Leste; Kiribati; Samoa; Papua New Guinea; Thai/Myanmar Border; Kenya and South Africa). In collaboration with 15 community organisations, they shared skills and knowledge in education; health; organisational/community development and trades.

## Volunteer Placements across Sectors



**Interesting Fact:** The 2017/2018 cohort of those who volunteered comprised of 78% female and 22% male ranging from 25 to 79 years of age.

In recent years many of the stories of Palms assignments have come from Timor Leste, where the majority of those who volunteer are placed. The stories below provide three examples from other countries in which Palms are working to build on local community strengths. Bev Watkinson and Laura Saldanha are in Kenya; Sue Ryan is in Samoa and Brian McDonald is in Papua New Guinea.

## Health & Vocational/Livelihood Programs

Beverley Watkinson, Palms volunteer has been working with the Ruben Centre in Mukuru, Kenya since 2016. In the last financial year, Bev's main focus was on working with staff to ensure the objectives of the Ruben Centre Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 are being achieved. As a Human Development and Skills Training mentor she has worked alongside staff building skills that will enable further program development. **Their focus is on increasing improved health and vocational educational outcomes for women and young girls.**

The programs have included the establishment of a safe birthing facility that employs five trained midwives and three assistants. Within the first month 57 healthy babies were delivered. The Centre has also been able to acquire much needed funding to establish emergency response infrastructure that includes an ambulance service for Mukuru community.



Our newest volunteer (Aug 2018) at the Ruben Centre, Laura Saldanha adds her mentoring and physiotherapy skills to the establishment of antenatal and postnatal physio service to allow women to have the best possible experience of motherhood.



*Physio Laura stretching with the children in the car park.*

Bev's skills in curriculum development and facilitation have also been utilised in the Small Urban Farming & Small Animal Husbandry program. This curriculum has been taken up and now also provides training in Urban Agriculture at Kalobeyei, a UNHCR refugee settlement outside Turkana (northern Kenya). Other course programs include Global Platform–Freelancer (28 students); Weaving (6 students); Transition to Work – disability inclusivity (33 students) and a variety of short courses in Embroidery; Design; Bread Making and Jewellery (15 students).

Bev's approach to skill exchange is summarised by the Director of the Ruben Centre "...as an all embracing and welcoming approach that continues to empower and endear others to her and to the Ruben Centre" (Br Frank O'Shea - Director, 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018)



*Bev and Ruben Centre staff member Belinda Kamundi with her new baby Gloria Njoki.*

## Educational Opportunities for Students & Teachers

Sue Ryan is in the final six months of her two-year placement with Don Bosco College & Vocational Technical College, Savai'i, Samoa. Sue's role has combined teaching senior Chemistry/Science and providing professional support for Science teachers across the school.

Sue's focus on improving learning outcomes for junior and senior science students saw her introduce and train teachers in computer technology and software to lift independent learning. A suite of computers donated to the school now provide senior Chemistry and Biology students with enhanced and extended opportunities for science learning within a dedicated study space.



*Sue Ryan, Palms Science Teacher/Mentor – Don Bosco College & Vocational Technical College, Samoa.*

Sue's years of experience in Science teaching also has been used working with Samoan teachers to develop a Skills Based Science Program for junior science students. The Program provides activities that promote more interactive student engagement. In consultation with teachers Sue has developed a Teachers' Manual that provides a guided program and outline of the various Science activities/experiments to accompany the lesson theory. The simple practical activities will assist to reinforce and make learning more fun. The science works of students will be displayed and supported by a newly introduced annual Science Fair.

According to Fr Tevita Nukuluve Lefai (Principal) the Palms volunteer contribution to the school has assisted in improving the overall educational standard and reputation. He told Palms "The volunteers have adjusted well to our environment and culture helping to build good and friendly relationships within the school, parish and broader community" (7<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).



## Building Capacity in the Electrical Trades

Brian McDonald began his placement with the Archdiocese of Mount Hagen in the Papua New Guinea highlands at the end of January 2018. Mutual development, an important tenet in Palms approach to volunteering, is epitomised in Brian's relationship with the community.



**Tradies in arms** – Brian (centre) with Kenzie, and Nixon, two electrical students from the Technical Vocational Education Training centre in Rabiamul.

Tep (pictured right) is learning on the job about electrical work while Brian learns as much from Tep about Hagen culture. The work has been focused on replacing generators currently used as the main power source. Solar technology is the way forward, especially out in the more rural areas.

Brian and Tep also provide training for students from the local vocational school, enabling opportunities for first-hand, on the job experience with electrical installation. Safety in the workplace has been high on the agenda, ensuring that students maintain a strong sense of work health and safety measures.



# Community Engagement

In 2017/18 Palms has launched exciting changes across our public platforms. We have welcomed a new logo and a stunning, fresh website. This new public image marries our institutional identity of innovative relationship building in communities across borders with our public identity of reaching across geographic and other barriers.

## Rebranding

Our new Palms logo is a reimagining of our classic globe image. In the process of developing a modern image to serve as the face of the organisation we wanted to hold on to the core message inherent in the original Palms logo: Palms reaching across barriers to support communities abroad. For this reason we adopted palms into the new logo. The hands form a circle in a gesture that represents the mutual development that is fundamental to Palms' mission.

We have begun rolling out this new logo across our online platforms, our promotional materials, and our business stationery. Speaking on online platforms, we have worked with developers to design a website to engage new volunteers and supporters. In addition to providing a modern online space for the organisation, the new website provides simple navigation for visitors. We will be continuing to improve the functionality of the website for all visitors, whether they be donors, volunteers, Encounter participants, or new supporters.

Check out our new website at [palms.org.au](http://palms.org.au)

## Community Initiatives

### ***Palms Together Day***

Palms is committed to improving how we engage new and existing supporters. Palms Together Days are an opportunity for supporters to practice Palms' mission to reach beyond barriers of culture.

### ***Online Engagement***

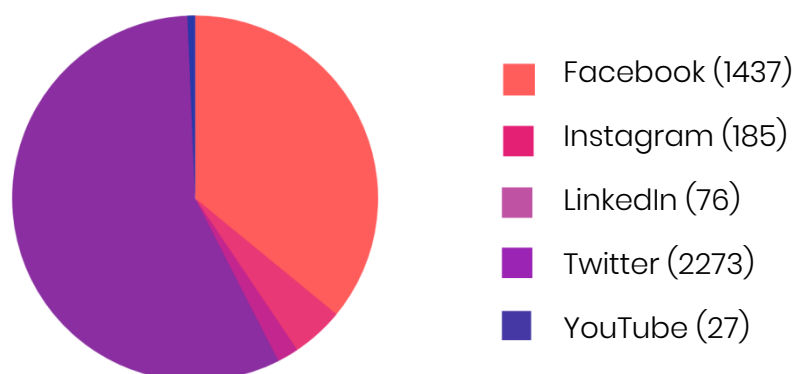
Our monthly newsletter, *Palms Post*, is distributed to 1,700 supporters across Australia. This newsletter shares updates from our volunteers and news of our activities here in Australia. We are proud to be growing this platform through new sign ups at community events and through web enquiries.

The content of *Palms Post* is driven by our website content. The Palms blog features articles and images from volunteers alongside insights from the Sydney team about the international development sector. We are continuing to diversify the content we share on this platform to attract new readers, both from within the international development sector and other fields in which Palms works.

Palms social media channels have been growing steadily across 2017/18. This growth is due to the quality and quantity of content supplied by volunteers in the field and the scheduling of social content in response to improved analytics. In 2017 we launched our Instagram account to share images from the field. LinkedIn has enabled us to build networks within the sector and with



potential corporate partners. We are continuing to improve our online marketing strategy to reflect the market of each of our platforms. This includes diversifying the type of content we produce to increase our followers across each of our platforms.



In 2018/19 supporters can look forward to new video content and new promotions. Palms will be enhancing our visibility within the international development field with more content exploring recent and relevant issues within the sector.

### **What's next**

In 2018 the community engagement team at Palms developed a suite of new activities to drive brand awareness and supporter participation. Utilising Palms' existing strengths in networking and returnee participation we launched *Meet and Greets*, a relaxed alternative to information sessions that serve as a conversational introduction to Palms' projects abroad. Hosted by returned volunteers, these get-togethers (1) offer potential volunteers a personalised introduction to the program, (2) give returnees an opportunity to explore their time overseas in their own way, and (3) promote Palms within the community through pre-event advertising.

Supporters can also look forward to *Disruptive Discourse*. This innovative discussion series will realise Palms vision within Australian communities by engaging communities with diverse opinions and perspectives on a given topic. Palms intends to run several of these discussions across Australia in 2018/19. They will be held in public venues and, similar to the *Meet and Greets*, will make connecting with Palms accessible and visible.

To see events coming up in 2018/19, visit [palms.org.au/events](https://palms.org.au/events).

# Financial Statement

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018		
	2018	2017
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Donations and Gifts	237,473	964,759
Grants	62,329	96,081
Investment Income	37,655	20,100
Other Income	54,923	86,710
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>392,380</b>	<b>1,167,650</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Palms Overseas Programs	306,568	330,722
Community Education	95,369	70,788
Fundraising costs	2,025	1,096
Accountability and administration	62,111	70,421
Domestic Programs Expenditure	21,655	2,971
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>487,728</b>	<b>475,998</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(95,348)</b>	<b>691,652</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>		
Gain on revaluation of investments	3,444	3,022
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(91,904)</b>	<b>694,674</b>
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2018		
	2018	2017
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	38,381	34,985
Trade and other receivables	1,080	2,539
Other financial assets	1,481,906	1,582,205
Property, plant and equipment	14,544	16,510
Other assets	32,114	26,102
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,568,025</b>	<b>1,662,341</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	112,309	112,359
Employee benefits	111,328	87,395
Deferred income	20,284	46,579
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>243,921</b>	<b>246,333</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,324,104</b>	<b>1,416,008</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Reserves	18,241	14,797
Retained earnings	1,305,863	1,401,211
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>1,324,104</b>	<b>1,416,008</b>

Note: The information on pages 16 and 17 was extracted from the financial statements of Palms Australia for the year ended 30 June 2018.

A complete set of financial statements and Independent Audit Report are available upon request.



**Palms Australia  
Directors' declaration  
30 June 2018**



In the Directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, the Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and associated regulations.
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of Directors made pursuant to sub s. 60.15 (2) of Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission regulation 2013.

On behalf of the Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "D. Hill", written over a horizontal line.

Director

13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "R. Hill", written over a horizontal line.

Director

# Board of Directors

## Chair

**Professor Marea Nicholson**

Associate Vice Chancellor, Australian Catholic University

## Treasurer

**Kristina Gunawan**

Finance Manager, CFO Strategic

## Board Members

**Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen**

Bishop, Parramatta Diocese 2016 – Present

**Dr Antony Faa**

Senior Medical Officer, Warwick Hospital

**Peter Smyth**

Lawyer

**Brendan Joyce**

Digital Strategist Lead, Caritas Australia

**Jane Woolford**

NSW Regional Coordinator, Save the Children Australia

**Alex Varley**

General Manager Customer Experience, Northcott



# What's Happening

We are excited to announce Palms is hosting a range of events in 2018/19. Whether you are new to Palms and want to discover more about us, or you are one of our long standing supporters, there are many ways to get involved. For full details on upcoming events, visit [palms.org.au](http://palms.org.au) or call Robert on 02 9560 5333.

## Discover Palms

### September 2018

- 22. Meet and Greet – Newcastle **New!**
- 22. Meet and Greet – Glenbrook **New!**

### October 2018

- 16. Information Session – Melbourne
- 20. Meet and Greet – Eltham **New!**

### November 2018

- 9. Information Session - Brisbane

### January 2019

- 4 -12. Orientation Course - Sydney

### June 2019

- 9. Palms Together Day - National  
Celebrate culture and company with a feast in your local community. Host a Palms Together Day lunch or dinner to support community development abroad.

## Encounter Culture

Want a genuine experience in a new culture without having to commit to long-term volunteering? Let Palms take you on an intimate, authentic tour of Timor Leste, Samoa, or Myanmar with one of our Encounters. Palms Australia's Encounters are ethically run group tours that provide participants with authentic, hard to come by experiences. If you have previously joined Palms on an Encounter, we are pleased to launch a new itinerary in Myanmar for 2019. Book today to be one of the first to discover this new tour.

**Timor Leste – 7-19 April 2019**

**Samoa – 7-19 June 2019**

**Timor Leste – 1-13 September 2019**

**New! Myanmar – 16-18 November 2019**



# One cup. So many reasons to choose fairtrade.

Order today at [fairtradecoffeecompany.com.au](https://fairtradecoffeecompany.com.au)





## **Become a Member**

Want to be a part of Palms' strategic vision and governance?  
Become a member!

Palms Australia is a unique, independent and democratic organisation, open to the direction of its members. The board has seven directors elected by members.

Members are an essential part of achieving our vision of people cooperating across cultures in order to achieve a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world free of poverty. Members receive full reports on our work and direct the organisation by participating in general meetings, organisational reviews and electing the board of directors.

Pricing for membership in 2018/2019:

Single: \$76

Concession/Pensioner: \$38

Couple: \$114

Organisation: \$227

If you would like to become a member of Palms Australia or renew your existing membership, please complete the online Membership Form at [palms.org.au](https://palms.org.au) or email [palms@palms.org.au](mailto:palms@palms.org.au) to request a form.

Thank you for being an active part of sustainable, locally driven development initiatives.





Palms Australia







# Find your rhythm

on an assignment abroad with Palms Australia.  
[Palms.org.au/volunteer](https://palms.org.au/volunteer)





Palms Australia

PO Box 3109, Petersham North NSW 2049

Ph: (02) 9560 5333 | [palms@palms.org.au](mailto:palms@palms.org.au) | [www.palms.org.au](http://www.palms.org.au)

ABN: 33 001 882 337