

SOLIDARITY MATTERS



Spring 2022

NEW SCHOOL OPENING

Timor-Leste

**UPDATES FROM
OUR PROGRAMS**
*Sharing stories from
Asia and the Pacific*

**NEWS FROM OUR
SCHOOL SUPPORTERS**

St Terezinha's Central School Opening, Quelicai, Timor-Leste



Who we are

Australian Marist Solidarity (AMS) works to ensure that all young people have access to educational opportunities.

We believe education has the power to eradicate poverty. With your help, we support grassroots movements run by local people by empowering them to make a change in their community.

Working across Asia and the Pacific, our programs focus on providing access to education for vulnerable young people, building facilities for the future to ensure safe spaces for learning, and investing in resilience and readiness to help young people who need a little extra support to thrive in learning environments.

Together, we transform the lives of young people by raising awareness of the power of education and the funds that make it possible.

Together, we bring hope.

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Got a story?

We'd love to share it with our supporters! Please send it to us at ams@marists.org.au

Thanks to Conor Ashleigh for all the wonderful images of his that we use throughout each issue.



Our Winter 2022 issue was our first e-newsletter version. Keep an eye on your emails for future issues.



FROM THE CEO



Dear friends

Welcome to our Spring edition of Solidarity Matters. Here in Brisbane the birds are chirping and blossoms blooming, we hope that everyone is well and warming up after a cold and wet winter across the country.

As always we have lots of news to share and you'll find updates from our programs in Fiji, Vanuatu, India and Timor-Leste. We are particularly excited to be able to share updates from in-country visits, with Nigel visiting Fiji and then I was able to join him on a visit to our partners in Timor-Leste.

This month is significant as AMS farewells our inaugural Board Chair, Peter Sheehan, giving thanks for his eight-plus years of dedicated service. Peter has led AMS with integrity and humility, always keeping our eye firmly on our mission and the young people we serve. We thank Peter for his incredible contribution and wish him well.

We welcome Allison White as the new Chair of AMS. Allison has a long history with AMS and is perfectly placed to lead the organisation's next chapter. We'll introduce Allison further in our next edition.

I want to say a special thank you to some of our Australian funding partners who make much of our work possible. It was lovely to recently join the **Emergent Foundation** for their annual sports lunch, the proceeds of which support our ICFP Teacher Training College and CYC Ponta

Leste Youth Centre in Baucau, Timor-Leste. We have also had increased commitments this year from our friends at Lenity Australia and the Marist Mission Centre, who both have long term commitments to a range of programs in different partner communities. We'll highlight some of these partnerships in upcoming editions of Solidarity Matters.

I would like to add my thanks to our team members who are moving on to other adventures. Kate, Debra and Chris have all made significant contributions to our work and team and AMS is deeply grateful for your commitment and work. I echo our Board's thanks for your contributions and wish you all the best in your next chapters. A special thank you also to Deirdre Looney who kept the wheels turning while I was in Timor-Leste and then on leave in South Africa.

We are blessed with a truly incredible group of people here in our little AMS office!

I hope you'll enjoy reading about some of our recent work and progress. Special thanks to everyone who donated to our mid-year appeal, we'll be in touch with you again soon to share stories of the impact of your support.

Yours in solidarity.

Bec

Staff profile



In this issue, we would like to introduce you to our Acting Fundraising and Communications Manager, Lexie Jones, who joined AMS in April. Lexie has an extensive background in events management, working with the Brisbane Racing Club for ten years, responsible for planning and delivery of a large and diverse events calendar and special projects. She has moved into the not-for-profit sector, most recently working with Surf Life Saving Queensland managing their 2021 QLD Lifesavers Appeal. In her AMS role, Lexie is responsible for engaging our AMS community through the vehicles of communications and fundraising and is excited to work with passionate, loyal and engaged supporters. She loves the opportunities for growth and development at AMS and contributing to making a positive impact across a broad range of programs.

Lexie has recently completed an MBA at Griffith University and is currently studying a Bachelor of Psychology full-time at the University of South Australia. Lexie enjoys gardening and growing food, bringing it to the table through her passion for cooking.

She is an avid sourdough fan and loves the process of creating fresh loaves finding it meditative and relaxing. In her free time, she enjoys camping, particularly in hard-to-reach places, where she enjoys the solitude and quiet that comes with connecting with nature.



St Terezinha's Central School Opening Quelicai

We are delighted to share photos with you of the official opening of St Terezinha's Central School Quelicai, Timor-Leste. As you can see, it was a wonderful day, full of community joy and gratitude.

This massive rebuilding project is all thanks to you - our wonderful supporters. St Terezinha's in Quelicai is a regional hub for 12 other remote primary schools in the eastern end of Timor-Leste. Like many schools in this developing country, foreign occupation, war, extreme poverty, and a lack of basic infrastructure caused St Terezinha's to fall into disrepair. There hadn't been any building upgrades in about 40 years. Due to the generosity of supporters such as yourself, this has changed. The school improvements are extensive, and the new classrooms are ready for a new generation of young Timorese students to gain an education.



We'd like to acknowledge all of our friends, including our school communities, Marist College Ashgrove, Catholic College Sale, Galen Catholic College and Assumption College Kilmore, for helping turn this dream into a reality.

Special thanks also to The Italian Bishops Conference, Kindermissionswerk and Aid to the Church in Need, who provided significant funding for this building. It was also wonderful to have a

representative from the Australian High Commission in Dili travel to join the celebration.

It was a joy for us to share our Timorese visit and the opening at St Terezinha's with fellow Australian Marists; Mark Elliott (MSA Regional Director, QLD/ NT & Board Director); Michael Newman (Principal, Marist College Ashgrove); Mena McLean (Chaplain, Marist College Ashgrove) and Paul Reed (Mission Leader, Assumption College Kilmore).



Conferenza Episcopale Italiana



DIE STERNSINGER
KINDERMISSIONSWERK



Aid to the Church in Need



AMS UPDATES

Thank you Margie!



Thank you for your hard work, Margie! Margie Beck AM has retired from ICFP, Baucau, Timor-Leste - and a beautiful celebration marked the occasion. More than 400 members of the extended ICFP community gathered on 7 May for a farewell ceremony for Margie, affectionately known as Mana Margie, as she prepares to return to her home city of Sydney. Margie first came to Timor-Leste in 2002 at the invitation of the founding Director, Br Mark Paul.



At the time, she was a lecturer in education at ACU. Mark and Margie, with considerable guidance and practical help from Br Tony d'Arbon and his colleagues from ACU, set about establishing a Catholic teaching college. As AMS supporters know, ICFP has since become a flourishing and well-respected educational facility, producing world-class teachers. Well done, Margie - we appreciate your extensive contributions.

Marist Association Assembly

AMS CEO Bec Bromhead and Board Directors Michael Sinclair and Mark Elliott joined Marists from across Australia at the Marist Association Assembly in Sydney. Marists gathered to connect, share stories, dream and imagine the future for the Marist mission and life in Australia, as well as our connections to our neighbours and global fellow Marists.



Community gatherings

The end of COVID travel restrictions has opened up opportunities to spread the word in person. Our CEO Bec hosted an in-person Adelaide supporter event in mid-June. The event was held at Sacred Heart College and was a wonderful opportunity to share the achievements of AMS and the plans for the future. An online event was held for community members in Sydney in June. A smaller gathering allowed for an in-depth conversation between the participants and our CEO.



Mid Year Appeal



Through the amazing generosity of our community, the AMS mid-year appeal raised \$76,000 to educate young people in need in the Asia-Pacific. It takes special people to change lives - thank you! In 2021, AMS worked with local communities in 18 countries, supporting 42 projects that directly benefited 10,250 lives. When you give to AMS, you support projects that transform the lives of vulnerable young people.

AMS UPDATES

Fiji Program visits



Life-Giving Skills for Marginalised Students in Fiji. In April 2022, AMS Program Manager Nigel Sydney met with Br Kees, Country Coordinator of the Marist Brothers in Fiji and the Project Coordinator, to help to plan for AMS' most recent program providing support for the continuing operations of Marist Champagnat Institute (MCI), Suva, Fiji. MCI is Fiji's only post-primary schooling for those with learning difficulties and special needs. It focuses on each student's educational, vocational, social, and

emotional skills. Each year around 144 students aged 13 – 19 attend MCI for a second chance to obtain education and skills for effective participation in society. Thanks to the kindness of AMS supporters, in particular, our partner, Lenity Australia, MCI will continue its life-changing work during 2022 – 2024. A huge thanks to Sacred Heart School, Adelaide, and Parramatta Marist High, Sydney, who have generously contributed to AMS assistance to MCI.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Kulugia | Timor-Leste

Our AMS team and school project partners visited a remote school in the hills of Kulugia, near Baucau in the east of Timor-Leste. The team reports that it was a bumpy ride to get there, but the welcome was warm and wonderful!

Kulugia Primary School has been identified as the next priority for redevelopment by Baucau's Director of Catholic Education, based on student catchment area and the building's disrepair. The existing school, while dilapidated, is attended by 184 students aged from 6 to 11 years old.

With the help of AMS donors, we hope to support the Baucau Diocese community to construct a new school building in Kulugia in the years to come.

For over 20 years, AMS has worked with the Diocese of Baucau to rebuild schools for the country's extremely disadvantaged young people. There is much more to do. 46% of the East Timorese population is under 14 years old, less than 15% of children aged 6 to 11 are regularly enrolled in schools.

AMS gratefully acknowledges the generous donors who enable these life-changing services. When you give to AMS, your donation allows our continued support of projects, like these, to transform the lives of vulnerable young people.



PROGRAM UPDATES

St Michel Technical College | Vanuatu

April 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold made landfall on the island of Espiritu Santo as an intense category 5 system with sustained winds of 200km/h. St. Michel's Technical College received heavy damage. The roof was torn off in many places, which resulted in widespread water damage. AMS has supported St Michel's to rebuild the cyclone damaged college and provide new equipment. St. Michel's Technical College provides critical skills development for Vanuatu with both mainstream and vocational education pathways. The college has been supported by the Marist Brothers for 26 years. The school has 354 students enrolled from grades 7 to 12, and a further 80 enrolled in the vocational stream of the school. The rebuild of St Michel's function and staff room has now been completed. New computers have arrived as well. Thank you to all who have made this possible through your kind donations to AMS programs – together, we are creating hope.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Chetana Boys Hostel | India



Over 20% of India's 1.3 billion people live in poverty, and less than 4 of 10 children progress beyond three years of schooling. Since 1974, the Marist Brothers have worked in India to help the most marginalised children break the cycle of poverty through education. In 2003, the Brothers established the Marcellin Trust for social and humanitarian work in India. With your support, AMS partners with India's Marist communities to create hope for vulnerable children and their families.

Chetana Projects, West Bengal

Chetana Boys Hostel in West Bengal, Eastern India, allows the 'poorest of the poor' to attend local schools. Parish Priests and other religious entities refer highly marginalised boys to the Hostel for accommodation, food, and education support. Local Priests, Sisters, and Brothers provide ongoing pastoral support to the boys and their families.

The Chetana Hostel has recently introduced extra tuition to boys at the Hostel to supplement their local schooling. Through AMS, basic furniture, laptops, projectors, and books are now available for tutoring and for teacher and parent meetings. The Chetana boys have joined online meetings with Marist College Canberra students, an experience

appreciated by both cohorts. With support from AMS, the Brothers have used Hostel facilities while the boys are at school to provide vocational tailoring skills and sewing machines to impoverished girls and young women. The skills gained have led to self-employment and other work opportunities.

Hostel student outcomes

In May 2022, Brother Jiji, Project Coordinator, told us about current student progress and graduate outcomes. Five graduates are now in various seminaries, and around 20 attend university. It's noteworthy, too, that with the extra tutoring support, some boys are now topping the class at their local school. Chetana's new teachers have requested information and training on the 'Marist way' to better meet the needs of the children. In response, a project focussing on Teacher Formation is underway to share the spirit and ethos of educating in the Marist Tradition, inspired by St Marcellin Champagnat "to educate a child; first, you must love them, and love them all equally". Six formation sessions between local Brothers and the teachers are taking place, as well as three gatherings of Brothers, teachers, parents, and community to share the value of education in the Marist way. The Brothers recently identified

further urgent community needs and, with AMS assistance, will provide a year's Family Food and Education Support to 100 families in the Santhal community. Basic food and essentials packages ('Parcels of Joy') reach 400 vulnerable children and parents.

The Future

With support from donors, the Marist Brothers aim to build a two-classroom community centre to extend educational and vocational opportunities. The classrooms will enable vocational tailoring skills for women and girls, as well as five classes a week in reading, writing, computers and spoken English. An additional 50 girls and 30 boys will benefit from the classes.

Thank you

For almost 20 years, AMS has joined India's Marist community to help extremely disadvantaged young people and their families to live with hope and dignity. AMS gratefully acknowledges the generous donors who enable these life-changing services.

When you give to AMS, your donation allows our continued support of programs like these to transform the lives of vulnerable young people.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Day in the Life Campaign



The Day in the Life campaign supports students' access to education in Timor-Leste. It asks Australian students to step into the shoes of a student in Timor-Leste by walking to school, learning the language, cooking traditional food or taking part in a school assembly.

In August, the students from **John Therry Catholic College** held a Book Week, BBQ and Jersey fundraising day. \$1200 was raised on the day, which will support our projects throughout Asia and the Pacific.

As part of their 'Steps to Success', **Cardijn College Galilee** elective Year 8 students will be running up to 12km in the City-Bay Fun Run this month (18/9)! They have raised over \$1000 to help AMS to support young people to access educational opportunities.

AMS believes education has the power to eradicate poverty. Our projects focus on providing access to education for vulnerable young people and building facilities for the future to ensure safe spaces for learning.

You can help schools raise money through our Day in the Life Campaign, It only takes a minute, and any money you can give (no matter how large or small) will go a long way to help students reach their target. Head to dayinthelife.org.au to donate.

MSA Biennial Conference



Wonderful to join our Marist Schools Australia community for their Biennial Conference in Brisbane in August. AMS hosted a number of workshops and conversations with our school colleagues and friends.



Marist College Canberra have continued their outstanding support for AMS. Congratulations to the College leaders who had their heads shaved in support of the Australian Marist Solidarity Appeal. Thank you!



SPRING RECIPE

Caril de Galinha - Chicken Curry

Timor-Leste is a country with Asian and Portuguese food influences. Give this Timorese curry recipe a go. But be careful on the spice. It could be too hot to handle!

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1.5kg chicken, cut up into 8 to 10 pieces
- ¼ cup minced shallots
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 medium-sized tomato, finely chopped
- 12 dry red peppers, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- ⅓ cup coconut milk or water
- 2 teaspoons tamarind paste or minced sour prunes
- 2 tablespoons julienned fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons minced lemon grass, or 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 medium-sized green pepper, cored and chopped
- 1 medium-sized sweet red pepper, cored and chopped
- Serves 4 to 6

Method

1. Heat one tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken pieces and sear, turning them often, until lightly colored. Remove chicken to a platter.
2. Add the remaining oil to the pan along with the shallots and garlic. Cook, stirring, until shallots turn light brown (about four minutes). Add the tomatoes and continue cooking until the oil separates (about three minutes). Stir in pepper flakes, turmeric, black pepper and paprika.
3. Add the chicken pieces and mix to coat them with the spices. Add the coconut milk, along with the tamarind, ginger and salt. Mix well and bring contents to a boil. Cook and cover, over medium-low heat for 30 minutes or until the chicken is tender. Fold in the lemon grass and peppers. Cook for an additional five minutes. Uncover and serve immediately garnished with chilies.



GOVERNANCE

Board update

The AMS Board Sub Committees met in mid-August and were followed by a quarterly **Board meeting** on 2 September. The meeting was a particularly significant one as outgoing Chair Peter Sheehan handed over to Allison White.

The Board received updates on a number of **program partnerships** and noted the high volume of work currently being managed by the programs team. Directors commended the programs staff for the high quality of their work and noted the five new programs approved by the Programs Committee and four initiatives approved by the AMS CEO, as per their respective delegations. These new agreements cover work in Timor-Leste, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, India and Fiji.

AMS Directors continue to monitor the **2022 budget** and noted that additional revenue received from funding partnerships has resulted in AMS supporting more work than anticipated in 2022. AMS Directors also reviewed the organisations **risk register** and noted that there are no new critical risks at this time.

Following reviews and recommendations from the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, the Board approved a new Code of Conduct for the organisation and approved reviews and updates of the following policies: Investment Policy, Cyber Security Policy, Employee Leave Policy, Counter-Terrorism Policy and Complaints Management Policy. These updates will shortly be reflected in the **policies** section on the AMS website.

The Board acknowledged the contributions made by **outgoing staff** and wished them well for their next chapters. Directors also heard about AMS' contribution and participation at the recent **MSA Biennial Conference** in Brisbane and the **Marist Association Assembly** in Sydney, noting the value in AMS being present at both broader Marist community gatherings.



Operations update

It has been exciting to resume travel and **visit AMS Projects** for the first time in two years. Programs Manager, Nigel Sydney, travelled to Fiji in May to visit with our project partners there, and in June, both Nigel and CEO Bec Bromhead visited AMS project partners in Timor-Leste. We welcomed the opportunity to join our extended Marist family at **recent events**, including the **Marist Association Assembly** in Sydney and the **Marist Schools Australia Biennial Conference** in Brisbane. AMS ran workshops and forums at the conference, and the AMS team joined our colleagues from Marist Centre Brisbane to volunteer at the event. It was wonderful to meet so many of our supporters in person again.

Plans are underway for **AMS Community Gatherings** in Melbourne and Brisbane later this

year. **Keep an eye on our events page** and social media to register and join us!

The three-yearly accreditation assessment with AMS' peak body, the **Australian Council for International Development** (ACFID), has been completed and submitted. This is a very detailed review and requires reporting on 33 commitments across 9 principles, ensuring that we are aligned with best practice in our sector. We look forward to receiving feedback from ACFID on our submission in the coming months.

There have been changes in the **AMS team**, as we farewelled Kate Slesarewich, Finance Coordinator and Debra Hudson, Communications Manager and Christopher Boevink, Marketing & Design Officer who are all moving on to pursue new opportunities. We thank them for the

significant contributions they have made to AMS, and their energy and commitment will be greatly missed by the team.

Lexie Jones, who joined us earlier this year as our Fundraising Officer while Anna is on parental leave, will now be our Acting Fundraising and Communications Manager. See Lexie's profile on page 3 of this edition. Two of our wonderful volunteers, Kate Andrews and Rachael Long, have joined the team for a few months to provide support in the communications and programs portfolios. AMS is **currently recruiting** for a Finance Officer and a Communications and Engagement Officer. See our website for further details.

60 SECONDS WITH Jim Whiting, AMS Board



Q. How did you come to know about/connect with AMS?

A. I have had strong connections in Adelaide with all matters Marist for many years, from my schooldays at Sacred Heart College, Adelaide. Eventually the tentacles of Brother AI (Allen Sherry, past AMS CEO) found me. He grabbed me for AMS involvement while he was doing a South Australia roadshow. After a period of contribution to AMS, I was invited to join the Board. It was a pleasure to work alongside Brother AI and others.

Q. What aspects of AMS work are you most passionate about? Why do you support AMS?

A. My daughter Jessica Plummer worked in the Solomon Islands for a

period in a charitable role. We visited her there and saw firsthand the needs of SI as a developing nation. Small aid inputs could make a big difference. We became interested in the broader region in the same context. AMS brings three of my passions together: the Marist ethos, Asia Pacific region, and the power of aid work. The whole package motivates me.

Q. What is your role with AMS?

A. As a member of the Board, I share the governance responsibilities with my fellow Board members. What I bring too is the long-term South Australia / Adelaide Marist connection, and my construction industry experience (Executive Chair, Badge). Given the number of education infrastructure projects supported by AMS, my building industry background contributes something very practical to the Board.

Q. Why do you support AMS?

A. I support AMS because I believe in what it aims to achieve, namely, to

give young people, particularly those who tend to get overlooked or are on the margins of their communities, hope and opportunities. AMS does this through partnerships with communities across the Asia-Pacific region.

Q. What is your wish for 2023?

A. AMS is going well. Its handover from Brother AI to CEO Bec Bromhead has worked. We've survived the difficulties with COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions. In 2022 – 23 I hope we will expand what we do: raise more money, to do more projects, to positively impact more young lives. Controlled growth is the aim.

Q. What else would you like the AMS readership to know about you?

A. I'm one of eight boys in my family. We eight brothers attended Marist Sacred Heart College, Adelaide at the same time (mid-60s, to mid-70s). I'm putting the challenge out to readers – can anyone beat that record of eight siblings at the one Marist School at the same time?

WAYS TO HELP



Together, we can make a difference. Our work is only possible because of our generous donors and supporters. You can help us in whatever way is best for you.

Make a monthly donation

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Call **07 3354 0600** or donate securely at

www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au

Get your school involved

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Head to www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au/learn

on how your school can help.

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Sign up to the AMS newsletter

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Leave a gift in your will

If you are able, we encourage you to consider leaving a legacy that will live on.

www.australianmaristsolidarity.org.au/partnerships/gifts-in-your-will

Workplace giving

One of the most cost effective and simple ways of making a donation.

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St Marcellin Primary School, Suva, Fiji