

# HOPE

*worldwide*

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## AUSTRALIA

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**Annual Report 2015**

On behalf of the HOPE *worldwide* Australia Staff and Board members: Hilary Gumley, Kevin Roland, Mike Fontenot, John Hancel and Jun Pablo may I present this brief overview of the activities of HOPE worldwide (Australia) in 2015. A number of new initiatives have been introduced while established programs have been strengthened and supported.



Community at Moroma

## HOPE in Australia

The Board of HOPE *worldwide* (Australia) continues to take its responsibilities both energetically and seriously. We thank those who have contributed to the Board and in particular to two people who have provided active and wise counsel over their time in this service. We particularly wish to thank Matt Beanland and Dr. Bronwyn Howell for their reliable, faithful and selfless service. They will now step away from Board responsibilities, but leave behind a sound legacy of thoughtful and respectful Board practice, solid decisions based on faithful service to the poor and will leave the Board having contributed to the develop-

ment of strong governance, harmony and strength.

Jun Pablo, is a recent addition to the board- he is a member of the Melbourne Church of Christ and has served as a doctor in Cambodia. He was appointed to the board at the AGM in October 2015. Mark Timlin has, again this year, quietly and respectfully undertaken his essential role as Country Director. Significant effort is still required to mentor the PNG programs as they mature and move to increasing self-sufficiency. The development of local programs - large and small, short term and persisting – will be a growing part of the work as the PNG programs increasingly mature and local autonomous skills develop. Wayne Merry serves as company secretary and manages the Australian accounts as well as providing technical support for PNG.



HOPE 2015 AGM in Brisbane with Graham Gumley (right) speaking

## HOPE in PNG

HOPE *worldwide* (PNG) has been operating for 21 years, delivering multiple programs, some of which have matured whilst others requiring revision. Health-related programs are being strengthened,

particularly the 9 Mile Clinic. New avenues continue to be explored for supporting the needy within our churches and the wider communities. Education programs look to become more of a focus in 2016. The HOPE worldwide PNG Board has been strengthened by the addition of Felix Tokwepota, who also leads the Port Moresby Church of Christ.

HOPE *worldwide* (Australia)'s partnership with HOPE worldwide PNG has provided multiple levels of support over many years. In In 2015 this support helped to secure land for the Gumine Clinic and install water tanks at 2 locations.

Continued improvement in governance has been aided by visits by Mark Timlin, Mike Fontenot and Forest Versele plus the regular administrative in country assistance brought by Wayne Merry. The planned addition of a qualified accountant to the PNG team will allow for more in-country management of project grants in 2016.



Sydney and Melbourne disciples travelling to Gumine

Drought in PNG: in 2015 a widespread drought led to crop failure. Our supporting churches across Australia and

New Zealand extended a loving hand to many who faced hunger and starvation. \$20,000 was raised in response to the urgent need and provided much-needed rice, not only for the members of the Gumine church, but also to the surrounding community benefitting approximately 3,000 people.



Thanks for food relief in Gumine

## Providing opportunities for Service

Perhaps the most prominent and effective programs for volunteer activities are those of the **HOPE Volunteer Corps**. These mission team efforts help connect willing and skilled volunteers from our churches and areas of need in a coordinated and well-planned manner. These programs foster personal development, leadership skills and strengthen commitment to compassionate love and care. Following a successful Volunteer corps to PNG in December 2014, a HOPE Youth Corps took place in Fiji in December 2015. This involved a group of 25 volunteers from our churches around the



world (Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA and Switzerland) in service projects in the Fiji Islands. Activities were facilitated by the Suva Church of Christ and included repair work to

a primary school, visiting and spending time with children at an orphanage, living at a rural village, coordinating a summer school program and setting up a library for the village children.



Team HYC Fiji 2015 at orphanage

## Local Programs

For many years the principal activities of HOPE *worldwide* (Australia) have been undertaken in PNG and responding to needs overseas. With the establishment of local HOPE REPS in all of the Churches a growing focus on local service programs has begun to show fruit. Regular conference calls with the HOPE Reps, moderated by Mark Timlin, have provided co-ordination of activities and generated sup-

port and fresh ideas. Current programs include:

**Senior afternoon tea** (plus activities) in Melbourne: popular activities have included zumba and cabarets.

**Soup kitchen in Sydney** collaborating with Swag...to serve the homeless in Sydney.

**Ronald McDonald House** in Auckland—serving and entertaining sick chil-



dren with their families.

**Mental health** “Words of Life”—a peer support program in the Goldcoast.

We would like to express our thanks to the HOPE Reps: Brisbane—Erik Lens Van Rija, Sydney—Phil Bohringer, Perth—Jon Lucas, Melbourne—Franc Snoeks, NZ—Dave Bliley, and Gold Coast—Wayne Thornton, for taking on this new responsibility and looking forward in faith to growing opportunities for engaging disciples in local service programs.



Seniors afternoon tea with the Melbourne “Super Singles”



Sydney volunteers raising funds for the Gumine water project

Other fund-raising initiatives included Walkathon in Sydney, which have provided funds to bring a freshwater storage capacity to the HOPE medical clinic at Gumine. In Melbourne, Jose Lozano together with talented musicians put on “Coffee for a Cause”—a talent night over coffee and cake raising much needed funds for the HOPE Youth Corps in Fiji. The Brisbane church also put on a music night supporting PNG.



“Coffee for a Cause” to raise funds for HYC Fiji 2015

## Fund raising

In 2015 all of the affiliated Churches in our region participated in an Annual Day of Giving, raising \$22,000 to support activities in PNG, local volunteer programs in Australia as well as assisting those affected by the earthquake in Nepal.

## Finances 2014-15

Grateful thanks go to Wayne Merry. Wayne has sacrificially travelled to PNG on multiple occasions to continue to assist HOPE PNG with their financial management allowing them to grow in their man-

agement skills as they seek to righteously handle the donated funds they manage in order to see their work completed.

We are grateful for the ongoing financial support from so many. The financial standing of HOPE worldwide Australia has improved over this year as detailed in our financial report. This is available at our website ([hopeworldwide.org.au/members.html](http://hopeworldwide.org.au/members.html)).

I would like to thank the members for their enthusiasm, service and support this year.

*Graham J. Gumbly*

Board Chairman

## HYC 2015

### Philippines Testimony by Hannah Casihan

To be honest, I didn't really expect anything at the start. I was excited, yes, but didn't know what would happen. But to my surprise I found that the people I met completely took my heart away. Looking back, I was there to help but was given to and experienced so much more than what I gave. A cliché but it is so true. Who would have thought that I could contribute to building a house? There I saw people that were just like me, but were in great need. It's easy to see people by what they lack and need help in but this trip showed me how to love and meet people where they are at. Their attitude and outlook on life is something that to this day I am still in awe of and probably will

be for the rest of my life. They choose joy over despairing over what they do not have which really reflects what Paul says in Philippians 4. Just as Paul has learnt the secret to being content in any and every situation so too did the family that we built the house for. They lived off of nothing, and yet never complained.



House built by HYC Philippines 2015 volunteers

If there is one thing that can define this trip, it's having one sack of rice, a thing that most of us have never lacked in. I have personally never experienced what it's like to go hungry but to see the family that we were serving be grateful for anything and everything that we gave them, was very humbling. I was humbled by the fact that we were able to provide groceries, which would last well over a month and even more humbled when the wife said this was the first time in her life to have one sack of rice. Each and every day the family would survive on whatever the husband caught while fishing for the day which is around 4-6 dollars, for a family of 5 and yet they were still joyful, grateful and loving. Seeing how they live daily made me realise just how much I complain about little things that don't go my

way. Talk about 'first world' problems. The way I live my life was put into perspective.

This whole trip showed me that I could definitely give more, love more and share more. Above all else, I saw just how important it is to be rooted in God because without him all the things I've done like help build a house, go fishing, do a puppet show and many other things would only be possible with Him. So now I come back with renewed eyes and gratefulness. Never would I look at a person and just see their need but love them just as Jesus has loved me. I am thankful and humbled for the opportunity that I was given to serve, but more importantly, I am grateful for the lessons that I learnt on how to give, serve and love.

## **Fiji Testimony by Patrick Hakenson**

In December 2015 we had HOPE Youth Corps in Suva, Fiji. Roughly about thirty of us from all over the world took part in the program and for a lot of us it was the first time serving on a HYC (including myself). We had no idea what we were getting ourselves into but the one thing that stayed true was that we were ready, ready to do God's work, to give our time, our hearts and bodies to the two week program!

During the first week we started by fixing up part of the John Wesley Primary School. This school was on the brink of being shut down due to the kitchen being so unhygienic and so we split up

into teams, we cleaned it up, sanded it down, painted it and the kitchen and the classroom attached to it were looking brand new by the end of the week. It was inspiring to see everyone give their absolute best from the get go.

During that same week we had a chance to visit St. Christopher's orphanage and that was my first time at an orphanage. The kids there were between the ages of 3 and 15. At the start of the day there the children sang songs for us to welcome us to the orphanage and by the time they started the second song I was literally balling my eyes out. I could not hold back the tears. Being exposed to the innocent voice of orphans is definitely one way to soften your heart.

The kids absolutely loved having us there, they were just so happy and 'fired up' to have visitors play and interact with them. I have to admit that coming out of that, I now have a lot of respect for parents because after 6 hours with the children I was exhausted and so I cannot imagine what it is like day in and day out.

During the week we would go out and share our faith after a day at the school or at the orphanage. In the evenings we would eat together and have our 'debriefing' groups. The schedule was jammed packed from the morning until evening. One thing I learned about Fijians- they are some of the friendliest people on the planet.

For the second week we set off to Nailega village and when we got there we were officially welcomed by a traditional Fijian ceremony which allowed us to be



a part of the village family. After that we were paired up with our roommates and then sent to our host families for that week.



Victoria Leigh with Fiji children

I was already amazed by how friendly Fijians were, but what they did for us in the village was above and beyond what I was expecting. They gave up their homes, washed our laundry, cooked for us and served us in anyway they could think of. They gave their absolute best and treated us like family. During the days at the village we renovated a small library, stocked it with books, and played, sang and taught the kids. One thing that stood out to me was how simple life was. People

were content with the little they had. We worked tirelessly through the week and by Thursday our work there was done. We finished off with a little celebratory concert- we acted out a skit, sang songs and danced. The whole village attended and seemed to absolutely love every moment of it.

All up, it was a spectacular trip, a great experience and a real eye opener. I felt in some way it was a bit similar to re-living the Acts chapter 2 in the Bible, how the Christians in the first century lived as a community. They were always together, whether praying, having meals, working, sharing their faith or just hanging out. I think this is a bit like what heaven will be like.

Coming back to Australia, I realise how small and minute my 'first world' problems are and how important it is to live a humble life. If you haven't experienced a HYC or been involved in volunteer work of some kind then I would definitely recommend that you look into because it will give you a different perspective on life and the things we do.

## Supporting HOPE worldwide

You can support us by:

**Donating:** Check out our website at <http://www.hopeworldwide.org.au/donate.html> for more details.

**Join a HYC:** We have trips to Port Moresby and Gumine in July this

year, along with HYC in other locations around the world.

**Get involved locally:** Have a chat with your local church HOPE rep about ways to serve in your local community.