John Wallis Foundation

into the highways and byways

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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The John Wallis Foundation supports socially and geographically isolated individuals and groups.

We respond to the voices, hearts and minds of people and communities who need companionship, hope, love and support.

We do this locally, helping out and journeying with people as they act on the challenges confronting them.

We, the John Wallis Foundation,

acknowledge that we inhabit an ancient Land.
We acknowledge and honour the original peoples,
who have lived in distinct aboriginal nations
as they have treasured and cared for this Land.
We commit ourselves to ongoing reconciliation
and our own growth in understanding.

From the Chairperson - Chris Smith

It is a privilege and pleasure for me to present this 2012/13 Annual Report for the John Wallis Foundation, reflecting a year of endeavour and connection as the Foundation further establishes itself both organisationally and as a potential support for those in our society who are in need of hope, opportunity and a chance to engage with others.

I was fortunate to be able to attend sessions at the Chapter of the Missionary Sisters of Service (MSS) in October 2012. The willingness of the Sisters to continually seek, and stretch boundaries of mission was immediately obvious in a gathering which exuded energy and optimism. In the opening address I quoted Richard Rohr saying that "God creates things that keep creating themselves." Just as the original seed for mission was sown in the heart of Fr John Wallis and has grown and blossomed through the lives of the MSS, so that seed is now sown and given life in the lives of others who look to continue a story of presence and support to those on our modern highways and byways.

Herein lies the challenge to us as a Foundation. How do we keep a story alive in a forward looking and contemporary way? How can we learn from the story of the last 69 years since the foundation of the MSS, and the years before, from John Wallis. Having learnt from this story, how can we journey with people in the manner of this MSS charism, one that builds trust, connects communities, nurtures spirituality and challenges injustice?

The major goals adopted by the Foundation help focus on the future. These goals are:

1. The MSS Charism is alive and understood – we ground ourselves in the Gospel inspired story of John Wallis and the Missionary Sisters of Service.
2. The John Wallis Foundation has a strong public presence – we know that, by the nature of the MSS, the work of the past has been carried out effectively but quietly and humbly. How can we, without moving away from this ethos, become known and seem to be worthy of support?
3. A Project Program is established – The work of the MSS continues in a very real way through the support of local community projects.
4. A secure financial basis for the Foundation - to enable works to be undertaken and to live out the hopes of the MSS for a continuing contribution to our society.

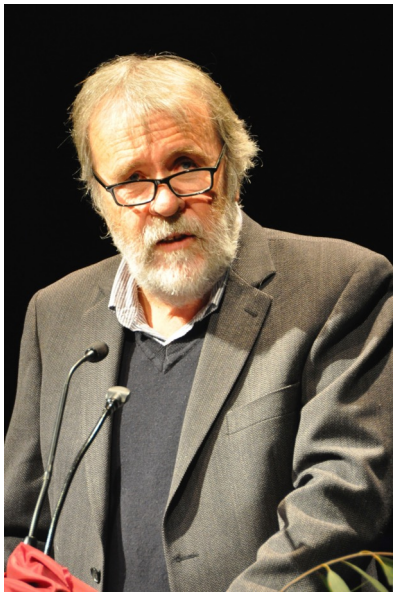
Events held during the year have supported the work toward these goals.

Chris Smith, Michael McGirr, Stancea Vichie mss & Martin Flanangan

Three highly successful *Memorial Lectures* attracted significant numbers giving us the opportunity to promote the foundation while providing thought provoking and highly welcomed presentations relating to our faith. Fr. Max Vodola addressed the significance of Vatican II 50 years on in his lectures to groups in Hobart and Launceston in October last year. This June, Martin Flanagan, well known journalist, spoke on "Spirituality in a Secular Society" followed by a Q&A with Michael McGirr, to an appreciative audience at Genazzano FCJ College in Melbourne.

Max Vodola

We are very grateful to Guilford Young College, Hobart, the Emmanuel Centre, Launceston, and Genazzano FCJ College, Kew, for hosting and partnering us in these events.



Martin Flanagan

A copy of Martin Flanagan's lecture is available on our website: http://www.johnwallisfoundation.org.au/news-of-activities-1/

Two community events gave the chance for people to share an experience in the outdoors, make new friends and learn about the Foundation.

A Family on the Trawool to Yea Trail...

The *Trawool to Yea Bike/Run/Walk Event* in August 2012 was well supported in an area close to the early story of Fr. John Wallis. The event had barely finished before the next year's event (Yarck to Yea) was being planned. We appreciate the partnering by the Australia Marist Community and the Catholic Parish of Yea in the planning and management of this event.

Stuart Whitney, a volunteer guide

Hobart Bush Walk

In March of this year an intrepid group over 50 in number tackled walks on Mt Wellington in Hobart led by Tom and Bernadette Burke and Stuart Whitney. Many new connections were made and a similar event is being planned for the coming year, probably based in the Dunalley area, recently severely affected by bushfires.

Having a rest!

Foundation Funded Initiatives

A reflection opportunity *"Discovering God in Everyday Life"* was offered in Goondiwindi, Queensland. Organized by the Toowoomba Regional Group after suggestions from the local community, they provided opportunities for gathering in a faith rich and hope filled space.

The MSS have a strong connection with the *Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking In Humans (ACRATH)*. The Foundation has supported this work by contributing funds towards the Radio Awareness Project (RAP) organised by ACRATH. The RAP is an awareness project working to build partnerships with local community ethnic radio programs in Victoria, and eventually nationally. The RAP carries a message of awareness and support to people and local communities at risk of exploitation through labour or human trafficking.

www.acrath.org.au

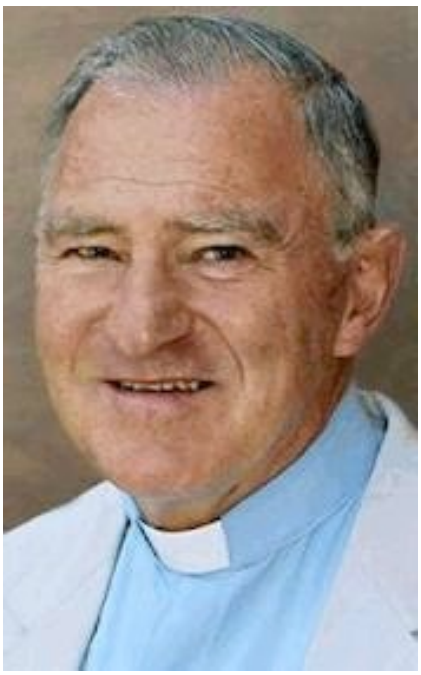
The RAP
RADIO AWARENESS PROJECT

In Melbourne, Board member Amanda Freeman has been working on developing a free hairdressing service for those on the margins in Ringwood, Victoria. Many clients who frequent the service are single carers who have no relief from caring for their loved ones. Several have mental health issues, addictions, physical and social issues. The John Wallis Foundation hopes to support this project to begin sometime in early 2014.

Our Patrons

When inviting people to become patrons of the John Wallis Foundation, the Board looked for people of some standing in the community, who share the vision and passion for mission of the Missionary Sisters of Service and the Foundation. The Board invited two people, Clare McShane and Bishop Pat Power. Much to our delight, both accepted the invitation. Let us introduce them to you:

Pat Power



People, especially those on the margins, have always been at the heart of Pat's life as priest and auxiliary bishop of Canberra-Goulburn. In 2012 Pat "retired" from his work as bishop in order to be more available to people who are struggling in one way or another. He is a strong spokes-person about concerns that are also close to the heart of the Foundation: social justice, the environment, ecumenism, inter-faith and inter-cultural relations, and the way these impact on people's lives.

When asked to express why he accepted the invitation to become a patron of the Foundation, Pat wrote:

"I share the same great love for the priesthood as Fr John Wallis whom I was privileged to know. Even though I have not had a lot of first- hand experience of the Missionary Sisters of Service I have greatly admired the way they are so much part of the lives, the faith, and the joys, hopes and struggles of the people they so generously serve."

Clare McShane

Clare McShane was born in Sydney and moved to Tasmania with her family when she was 17 years old. She attended Conservatory of Music High School in Sydney then St Michael's Collegiate school in Hobart before obtaining her Diploma of Teaching and Tasmanian Teachers Certificate. Clare was posted to Oatlands as a young teacher, where she met and married local grazier Allan McShane. They settled at Casaveen, a property grazing 11,000 sheep at Lemont. Clare and Allan have five sons.

Clare has known the Missionary Sisters of Service ever since she married Allan. The sisters regularly visited the parish of Oatlands from the 1950s, and from 1984 to 1993, first, Nancy Doyle mss and then Alice Fox mss were entrusted with the full-time pastoral care of the parish in the absence of a priest. The sisters became part of the lives of the people. Allan and Clare also came to know Fr John Wallis. Clare tells the story of her twin boys being prepared for confirmation by the late Barbara Hateley mss. Barb was talking with them about different saints names when one of the boys asked, "What about St Kilda!" It is easy to guess where that young lad's passion lay.

The McShane family recognised the need for some stability of income amid the ups and downs of the wool market. Clare started to design and knit garments and sold them at shows and field days around Australia. Casaveen Knitwear was born. One bale of fine merino wool from their sheep could make 130 garments. As the business grew, Clare involved other people in knitting the garments. At first they worked in their homes. In 1996 an operational centre was set up in Oatlands, and three years later a factory. Always concerned about the wider community, the McShanes opened Casaveen Café in April 2005. This was followed by an Interpretation Centre in March 2008 and the new Meeting Room. The café sources and showcases a great range of Tasmanian products.

Clare has received numerous personal accolades for her achievements including the 1994 Advance Australia Award, the 1996 Telstra Tasmanian Business Woman of the Year, the 1997 Telstra Tasmanian Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year, the 1998 Tasmanian Rural Achiever of the Year and the 2004 Bruce Forster Laincot Memorial Award for exemplary service to the merino wool and sheep industry. Clare was entered on the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women in 2008. The John Wallis Foundation is honoured to have Clare, a woman of vision and energy as one of its patrons.

John Wallis Foundation Regional Groups

Melbourne, Toowoomba, Hobart, Whyalla, Bundaberg

Whilst the Board is based in Melbourne, the intention is that initiatives be driven at the local level where the needs are known and, in many cases, where the MSS have a history of ministry. Regional groups of the Foundation exist in Hobart, Toowoomba, Whyalla, Bundaberg and Melbourne. It is still early days for these groups but we are already witnessing some very generous people willing to give of their time and wisdom in looking for ways to progress the work of the Foundation

We are keen that the regional groups grow and encourage anyone with an interest to contact us to find out about the meeting arrangements for each group.

Board Subcommittees... The Board has again operated on a subcommittee basis with these committees being Media, Oral History, Projects, Regional Groups and Fundraising.

Continued Fundraising...

The Foundation continues to seek financial support so that a significant body of funds can be accumulated, the earnings of which will be used to fund the identified projects. Whilst a number of the events have raised some funds, our major source of finance is from direct donations.

A number of people are now regular donors and we appreciate their generosity in supporting work which, quite frequently, they benefited from themselves in years past. We are also very grateful to those who are considering the Foundation in their will.

Our future depends on financial security and strength. Our work reaches out in ways which may differ from support from other causes. Being local community based and inspired, projects will be modest for a number of years. Their efficiency is measured not by the dollars spent but by the transformation that they bring about. The more funds we acquire, however, the more we can engage in these small but impactful programs.

Communication continues to be a priority for us and we have been blest by having *Highways and Byways* as a way to, with the MSS, keep in touch with many people all around the country. Sr Corrie van den Bosch leads this part of the work and has now shared her energies with the production of a new website which will hopefully allow many more to learn of us. Social media is gaining an increased profile for us also, particularly as we reconnect with people who were supported by the MSS in the past.

Keep in the loop of what is happening in the John Wallis Foundation by 'liking' us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/johnwallisfoundation

Continuing the journey with people, into the Highways and Byways...

Looking Ahead

The Board will be continuing its efforts to consolidate Regional Groups and working with them to identify ways in which the Foundation can support local communities.

There will also be an increasing focus on broadening the potential support base for the Foundation beyond those who have a connection with the MSS story. There is no shortage of potential projects; we are keen to find ways to support them! Our efforts to gain Deductible Gift Recipient status will continue.

Bringing people together...

Planning is already underway for a number of events but a clear focus in 2014 will be finding ways to support the MSS in celebrating the 70th year since their foundation in 1944. It is hoped that some of the planned gatherings will give opportunities to further enhance the profile of the Foundation and help people see that the work of the MSS can, and will, continue.

Final Comments

We continue to be inspired by the past, present and future of the Missionary Sisters of Service and are grateful to them for letting us share their story more and more. Each of the Regional Groups benefits from attendance at their meetings by the Sisters; we feel welcomed at all congregational events. Their ongoing affirmation of our work is truly appreciated.

At the end of the period of this report we farewelled Sr. Pat Quinn from the Board.
A foundation member of the Board and, prior to that of the Advisory Group, Pat made the regular trip from Toowoomba to Melbourne to attend our meetings and bring her particular wisdom and experience to our discussions. Her affirming presence and thought-filled comments are already missed but we know that she is now turning her gifts to the deliberations and work of the Toowoomba Regional Group.

The work of our Executive Officer, Bonita Ralph, has been invaluable during the year. Bonita brings a vitality and energy to her role; her initiative has seen us make great progress in a number of areas; her willingness to give so generously of her time has been noted and much appreciated.

We are very grateful for the generosity of all who have supported us financially. Those who contribute regularly help us plan ahead with confidence; those who remember the Foundation in their wills can also be assured that the impact of their generosity will be significant well into the future.

Our work cannot succeed without the generous support of those in our Regional Groups. They are the eyes and ears of the Foundation to identify needs; the arms and legs to help manage the projects; the heart to respond at the local level; the hands to greet; the mind to advise us. Their work is in the spirit of the charism of the MSS.

I also acknowledge gratefully the support of the leadership team of the MSS: Sisters Stancea, Bernadette and Corrie. Their faith in us; their willingness to be open to ideas; their gentle and wise counsel – all are essential to our growth and work.

Finally, the Board members of the Foundation have again given unstintingly in time and effort to help bring the vision of a Foundation to a reality. Their work at the regular meetings, on subcommittees and at other times between these gatherings brings energy, forward direction and purpose to the journey.

As we move into another year of the Foundation, we do so under the papacy of Francis, a man who is reminding us of our responsibility to reach out to others, to be authentic, to remember the poor. He is inspired by his namesake Francis of Assisi, one of whose well known sayings is to "proclaim the Gospel constantly and, if necessary, use words."

It sounds a good mantra to describe the MSS. May we listen to it also!

Chris Smith

Chairperson

Some knew the MSS as the 'Caravan Sisters'

From the MSS Leadership Team...

When Fr John Wallis was ordained priest as a young man in his early twenties, he became a spiritual leader. People recognized him as such as they came to know him in his pastoral presence.

Fr John was a people person. He listened to them and anguished with them. He took on board the immediate and universal questions touching people's lives and communities. He mulled over these questions, seeking ways in which they might be addressed. He lived out of an understanding of the often-quoted phrase: *Think globally, act locally*.

The seminal story of the founding of the Missionary Sisters of Service comes from a meeting of Father John with Mrs. Kath Hawkins on Bruny Island. Seeing for himself the isolation and lack of opportunities of that community, her concern to provide opportunities for her young family can be expressed in colloquial terms: *"Don't our kids matter? Out of sight, out of mind!"* Underlying this concern he heard a further question: *"Don't we matter? Are we not important too in the scheme of things?"* or perhaps : *"Who are we? and what is the meaning of our lives here in the bush, when we are out of sight and out of mind?"*

These are relevant and perennial questions for people in personal situations of trauma or loss and grief, for communities, for example, who struggle with the results of drought, flood or fire, and for countries suffering famine and hunger, war, civil devastation, the struggle for freedom and peace. Do we really matter? Can we have hope? Their longing calls out to us: *"Stand with us; be present to us; believe in us; be with us. Show us that out of sight is not out of mind.*
Give us hope. Your presence can show us the meaning of our lives, no matter what our situation. Then celebrate with us."

The Missionary Sisters of Service, founded by Father John, have worked side-by-side people from many backgrounds, from the post World War II migrants in the Hydro-villages of Tasmania, to the 'boat people' of the 1980's, to rural people and people in cities throughout Australia. They travelled to countless places, seeking out people in their homes, on properties and isolated communities.
They reached out to people through distance education in faith and their church life. They served as chaplains in industry and hospitals. They visited refugees and asylum seekers in detention centres, supporting them as they waited for their applications or appeals to be processed. They worked with the Deaf community, in family services, or standing by

people who have been trafficked into this country, going to court with them as the occasion arose. They became leaders in parish and community life.

Over the years the Sisters have also focused on the formation and training of people to become leaders in their communities and religious educators beyond the Catholic school system; they have trained people in counselling and provided spiritual formation which would sustain these leaders in their personal lives and in their roles within their families and communities. Appreciating the power of good reading to nourish people's lives and vision, they have managed Catholic bookshops and taken mobile bookstalls to people and places they visited.

Down many tracks, both literally and figuratively, the Sisters have travelled with courage and faith. Inspired by the Gospel, they have journeyed with people in their seeking meaning and purpose in the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of their lives, and continue to do so. Their compassionate presence with each other and with people engenders hope: there *is* meaning; there *is* purpose; there is a larger context in which our joys and dreams, our successes and disappointments and even the most difficult, painful or seemingly insignificant event or situation serves a purpose. This is the promise of the Gospel, and the faith that energises the mission of the Missionary Sisters of Service.

The Sisters are now thirty-two in number and are ageing. Their physical outreach is more restricted now. Yet they continue to be a vibrant community of women. The work of the Sisters continues to be relevant today. In 2010, they established the John Wallis Foundation to bring to life in a new way, the vision and mission of Fr John Wallis and the Missionary Sisters of Service - and to give new expression to that mission for today's world. The timing for this is right. Other people can take up the mantle and bring their gifts and vision to that mission.

In 2014, it is seventy years - in biblical terms, "three score and ten" - since the Australian-founded Missionary Sisters of Service began their work in Tasmania, spreading from there to many parts of Australia, and Singapore. It is time for everyone to celebrate!
How can we do this together?

From the Treasurer

The 2012-13 financial year has seen continued growth in the net assets of the John Wallis Foundation. At this stage in the Foundation's development, the emphasis in terms of financial matters has been on progressively building a corpus of funds through

(a) continuing to take opportunities to encourage further donations and bequests to the Foundation, mainly in association with the Foundation's profile-building events, communications, and

(b) investing the available funds.

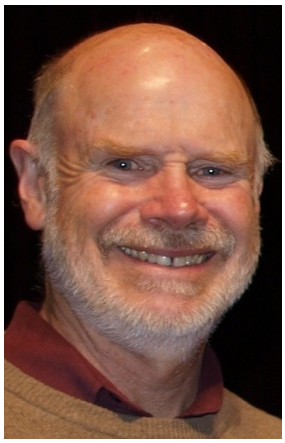
The purpose of building a substantial corpus of funds is to provide a continuing investment income which will substantially support the activities of the Foundation.

Considerable progress was made during the year on finalising an arrangement with an educational institution which will facilitate the Foundation being able to receive tax deductible donations to be applied in funding education-related initiatives. Such initiatives are a significant part of the present and anticipated activities of the Foundation. It is hoped that the facility to receive tax deductible donations will be in place early in 2014.
Donations for which a tax deduction is not required will continue to be used by the foundation to support a range of other non education-related initiatives.

To date, the financial assets of the foundation have been invested solely in term deposits and other cash investments. As interest rates have fallen considerably over recent years , and are likely to remain low for some time, from 2013-14 onwards the Foundation will increasingly invest its available funds in higher yielding but secure investments.

Brian Lennon

Treasurer



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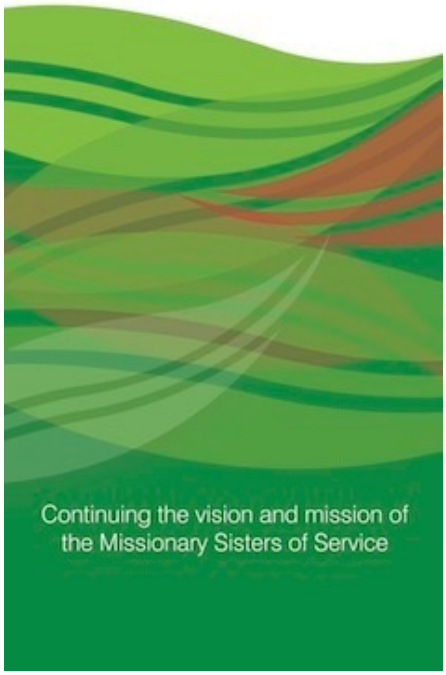

For more information about the Foundation, Bequests or to make a donation, please contact:

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