



Australian Government

AusAID

# FOCUS



THE MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIA'S  
OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM  
VOL 28 NO 2 JUNE-SEPT 2013

## **WATER SPECIAL**

How cooperation  
is preparing us for  
the future

## **SYRIA**

Responding to the crisis

## **RAMSI**

Ten years on, Solomon Islands  
in transition





## About AusAID

The fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty. This also serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity in our region and beyond.

The Australian Agency for International Development, AusAID, manages the Australian aid program using methods and partners that are effective in achieving results and efficient in delivering value for money.

### WHAT WE FOCUS ON

Our goals are:

- > saving lives
- > promoting opportunities for all
- > sustainable economic development
- > effective governance
- > humanitarian and disaster response.

### WHERE OUR AID GOES

Most of our assistance goes to developing countries in the Pacific, East, West and South Asia. We also provide aid to Africa and the Middle East and a small amount to parts of Latin America and the Caribbean where needs are also high.

### CONTRIBUTE TO FOCUS

Do you have an article idea for a future edition? The *Focus* team would love to hear from you. Visit [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au) for submission guidelines, contact the *Focus* Editor on +61 2 6178 5983 or email [focus@ausaid.gov.au](mailto:focus@ausaid.gov.au)

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COVER: In Mozambique, Sandimah (with her daughter) crosses an unstable bridge to go to the toilet. "I don't have a latrine in my house, so I go to the bush. It takes 15 minutes to get to the bush, over this bridge." Photo credit: Eva-Lotta Jansson/WaterAid



## Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of *Focus* for 2013. With so much going on in the world, and closer to home, it is heartening to bring you some wonderful stories that show how Australians are helping people in need. Throughout our region, and beyond, in Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe, Nepal, the Middle East—the work of our aid program continues.

Our feature on the conflict in Syria gives an insight into the complexity of this crisis, and shows some of the faces of this terrible war. Andrew Harper is the Australian head of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Amman, Jordan, where hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees have been pouring over the border for months.

It is cause to reflect.

Our special section focuses on Water—the most precious of commodities and the great leveller. No matter where we come from on this planet, we all need water, and the availability of clean water underpins many Millenium Development Goals—food security, health, healthy children. Some great stories about our work throughout the world remind us how lucky we are in Australia, and how much we have to share.

Please enjoy.

**SARAH TIFFEN**, *Focus* Editor

## Contents

### 4 Global news

#### Features

### 6 Syria

Stories and photos from the conflict in Syria that has displaced more than 2 million people.

### 10 Hard Labour

A new midwife program in Papua New Guinea is helping to save lives.

### 12 Special: Water

From the Mekong to Zimbabwe—how Australia is improving the lives of millions of poor people through better access to water and sanitation.

### 23 Special feature: RAMSI

As the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands looks back on ten years, we look at some of the accomplishments.

### 26 Q&A: Global Crop Diversity Trust

### 27 Country profile: Afghanistan

### 30 Rewind: Salty solution

### 31 Global education

#### SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO AUSAID'S HISTORY

AusAID has been delivering the Australian aid program for nearly 40 years, and the time has come to share our story. We're looking for photos, videos, audio files, old merchandise and souvenirs so we can create a richer portrait of AusAID's history.

All photos must be captioned, attributed and include permission for us to use them in the future. Submissions will be acknowledged upon receipt, and returned once a copy has been made. Email [history@ausaid.gov.au](mailto:history@ausaid.gov.au) for a copy of the submission form or for further information.





## IT'S ABOUT TIME: MINING FOR DEVELOPMENT

**AusAID's Mining for Development Initiative hosted the 2nd Annual Mining for Development (M4D) Conference and the 6th Biennial Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Global Conference in Sydney from 20–24 May 2013.**

The M4D Conference involved over 600 representatives from more than 40 countries—some of the world's top minds on natural resource management and development. The idea was to share their collective knowledge and experience to make sure the poor can benefit from the booming mineral resource sector.

Ms Doris Eaton and Ms Ume Wainetti, prominent community leaders from Australia's Pilbara region and Papua New Guinea's Western Province respectively, advocated greater women's involvement and leadership in negotiations at every stage of mining projects.

Ume and Doris provided conference participants with a unique and powerful insight into the deep desire of mining-affected communities to be involved in the development of their land.

Local procurement by mining companies was raised as one of the biggest development opportunities, and the key to greater social investment and benefits to communities. Mr Ainsley Butler, Chief

Investment Officer at Building Markets, reminded participants that "at the end of the day, poverty can only be beaten by jobs".

The EITI Global Conference, with more than 1000 representatives from nearly 100 countries, explored transparency as an important tool with which communities can break the resource curse and lift themselves out of poverty. Transparent systems reduce corruption. And with the right information, communities can demand better practices by government and companies.

Oxford University Professor Paul Collier reflected on Australia's potential as a key driver of change in the extractive industries. With over 150 years' experience, Australia is uniquely qualified to contribute to the global conversation on mining for sustainable and inclusive development. Professor Collier said the M4D and EITI conferences represented "the right conversation, in the right place, at the right time".

**GEORGIE PENMAN**

**For more information on AusAID's Mining for Development Initiative:**  
[www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/mining/](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/mining/)

ABOVE: Afghan Minister for Mines Wahidullah Shahrani speaking at the Mining for Development Conference in Sydney. Photo: Mike Wightman, AusAID

## AusAID SIGNS INNOVATIVE MOU WITH CARNIVAL AUSTRALIA

**AusAID has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with cruise company, Carnival Australia, to improve the livelihoods of people in the Pacific.**

"This MOU represents a significant step forward in implementing AusAID's business engagement agenda," AusAID Director General Peter Baxter said.

"It identifies areas where AusAID and Carnival can partner to help translate the economic benefits of tourism to the region into better incomes and employment opportunities for Pacific Islanders."

Cruise ships contribute an estimated \$34 million to Pacific economies and it is expected this will grow to around \$100 million annually within the next ten years.

The MOU, signed in July, outlines several areas for collaboration with Carnival to improve local business prospects. These include increasing access to the lucrative cruise tourist market for local producers and providing support for Ni-Vanuatu crew to be employed aboard Carnival Australia cruise ships.

AusAID previously partnered with Carnival in 2009 under the Enterprise Challenge Fund to increase tourism to Vanuatu and generate economic opportunities for local communities. The project improved on-shore facilities for cruise ship passengers on Mystery Island, Wala Island and Champagne Beach and trained local traders in hospitality and financial management.

The private sector is widely recognised as a major catalyst for development. It has the power to boost economic activity and to reduce poverty. Strengthening links with businesses both in Australia and in the region is a key commitment of the Australian aid program.



ABOVE: AusAID Director General Peter Baxter, CEO of Carnival Australia Ann Sherry and Vanuatu Prime Minister Moana Carcasses following the signing of the MOU between Carnival Australia and AusAID. Photo: Carnival Australia

# GLOBAL NEWS




## MORE ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIA

**A**ustralia's humanitarian assistance to Syria has reached over \$100 million. This includes a further \$22 million in July, to help the millions of people affected by the crisis.

Australia remains one of the top 10 donors to those in need in Syria, and regional countries hosting Syrian refugees.

Australia's new contribution will help deliver desperately needed basic services:

- > \$5 million to World Food Programme will help maintain emergency food supplies to three million people
- > \$3 million to World Health Organization will help address critical shortages in medical supplies
- > \$3 million to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) for safe drinking water and 2.5 million vaccinations
- > \$1 million to the UN Population Fund will help provide reproductive health care and psycho-social support for more than one million vulnerable women and children
- > \$5 million to the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) will help protect and shelter one million refugees in Jordan and Lebanon
- > \$4 million to Australian NGOs will help their life-saving work for Syrian refugees
- > \$0.5 million will support the deployment of Australian expertise in aid coordination.
- > \$0.5 million to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to coordinate the humanitarian response in Syria. 

ABOVE: The Domiz Refugee Camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is home to thousands of Syrian refugees. Photo: B. Sokol/UNHCR

## THE FIGHT AGAINST TB IN PNG



**T**he effort to stop tuberculosis (TB) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) received a boost in July with the opening of new specialist treatment facilities at Daru General Hospital in PNG's Western Province.


The facilities include six isolation rooms that meet international standards for isolation of airborne infections and a 16 bed ward for recovering TB patients.

The \$3.7 million ward is part of Australia's \$32.9 million commitment over seven years (2011–2018) to support the Government of PNG's approach to the detection and treatment of TB in Western Province.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the best way to stop drug-resistant TB is early diagnosis paired with Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course (DOTS) provided for patients in their own communities.

Australia supports the Government of PNG to implement WHO's DOTS protocol, which uses health volunteers

to visit TB patients daily to ensure they take their medication and complete their full course of treatment. Data from Daru Hospital shows the approach is working with mortality rates from multi-drug resistant TB falling from 25 per cent in 2011 to 5 per cent in 2012 (to September).

Australia's support also includes providing TB specialist staff, training for community health workers and volunteer treatment supporters as well as supplying medical equipment, drugs, a sea ambulance, and funding for laboratory diagnosis support in Queensland. 

### HEATHER MURPHY

ABOVE LEFT: A local child from Daru at the ward opening with a balloon distributed as part of the TB awareness raising campaign.

ABOVE RIGHT: TB physician, Dr Rendi Moke and TB Nurse Aid, Konia Sampson in the general TB ward which has 22 beds for recovering patients.

Photos: Andrew Gavin/AusAID





# SUPPORTING SYRIA

Thousands of refugees continue to flee the conflict in Syria that has killed more than 100 000 men, women and children. Since it began in 2011, more than 2 million people have also been displaced by the conflict, most seeking refuge in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and increasingly, Iraq. A refugee exodus of this size has not been seen since the Rwandan genocide almost 20 years ago.

Many of these refugees have settled in the community in Jordan and Lebanon, but others are housed in vast refugee camps. Life in these overcrowded camps is tough. Water, sanitation, education and housing services are severely strained.

Australia has contributed more than \$100 million to the crisis, putting it amongst the top 10 donors. Our major partners include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children Fund, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme.

The Australian public has raised \$1 million to support UNHCR respond to the crisis, proof that many of us have been touched by the unfolding tragedy.



**Australian Andrew Harper is the head of UNHCR in Amman, Jordan. Here, Andrew describes what the situation is like on the ground and why Australia's support is so important.**

*"As the numbers of people fleeing continues to increase, the response capacity of international*

*aid agencies has become dangerously stretched. We are critically short of funds and don't know one day to the next whether we will have the funds to deliver aid.*

*In Jordan, refugees arrive traumatised, without possessions and having lost members of their families. Around half of the refugees are children, most of them under the age of eleven.*

*UNHCR provides refugees with safety and protection.*

*They are given tents, food, blankets and basic supplies.*

*Za'atari camp has two schools so that children can continue their education; we try to make life as normal as possible.*

*It's very difficult to describe what it's like for refugees coming across the border. There is shooting and mortars being fired. The ground literally shakes with the explosions.*

*Recently I went with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, to the border. People were handing their children across the wire.*

*At the beginning of the crisis, the numbers crossing were tiny but then they started to increase. In one night we might*





receive 80, then 100, then 150, 200 and 300 until it got to the stage where it was no longer just a temporary response.

I was travelling with my family at the time, but was called back to set up a camp. Our challenge was to turn a piece of desert into something that would be habitable for thousands of people. In 10 days we cleared the land and put up 2000 tents.

Now Za'atari refugee camp (in Jordan) has over 100 000 people there and we're in the process of establishing a second camp. Can you imagine a city in Australia being built so quickly?

On any given day we might have eight semi-trailers arriving with tents, 4000 mattresses being made and transported to the camp, and a hundred trucks removing sewage. Our partners, including UNICEF, are responsible for delivering about a million and a half litres of water into the camp every day.

Last week we had 300 people who had been wounded and needed hospital care. Sometimes it's hard to plan out the day; you've got to focus on the moment, making sure that all of your efforts are providing the greatest value, to the greatest number in the most efficient way possible.

And this is just inside the camp. People forget that there are probably about 300 000 Syrian refugees residing in urban areas. They also need protection and assistance.


Whichever way you look at it, it's an enormous task, and the people contributing to the response have basically performed miracles.

I met my wife Erica when we were both working for UNHCR in Timor-Leste. She might have something to say

about the lack of family-work balance I have in this role, but she's also passionate about humanitarian issues. She works here in Amman with local NGOs doing legal aid work.

Because the camps and border are so close, I can get back to my family in Amman almost every night. I have three daughters under six—Isabella is five, Caitlin is three and Jessica is one and a half. Living here has been a unique experience for all of us.

The people of Jordan have been incredible. It's the fourth most water-poor country in the world and despite that, it continues to host refugees fleeing conflict in the region. Their generosity needs to be recognised. They don't say 'why don't the refugees go somewhere else?' For them it's an honour to help. When you are dealing with people who have that approach to life, it's hard not to be inspired.

I think anyone who works in a job where you can actually help people, without getting melodramatic, is fortunate. I'm actually dealing with people's lives and that keeps everything in perspective." 

**SOPHIE GORDON AND UNHCR**

**You can make a donation to UNHCR's Syria Crisis Appeal online at [unrefugees.org.au](http://unrefugees.org.au) or phone 1300 361 288.**

BACKGROUND IMAGE: The Domiz Refugee Camp, located near Dohuk in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is home to thousands of Syrian refugees. Photo: B. Sokol/UNHCR



**"6000 people a day are  
fleeing the conflict in Syria."**



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5



4





**1** On the move: Syrian refugees arrive in Jordan. Some carry belongings, others carry children. It is a dangerous crossing as people have been fired at near this point. Moments after this photo was taken there was a mortar explosion nearby. Photo: Jared J. Kohler/UNHCR

**2** A young mother crosses the border from Syria and becomes a refugee. In her arms she carries her one month old son. "Since he was born there has been non-stop bombing everyday," she says. Photo: S. Rich/UNHCR

**3** Destruction in Aleppo. Photo: UNHCR

**4** Two brothers aged six and three sleep as they wait with their family in a tent in Jordan. The family have just become refugees after fleeing Syria. Photo: S. Rich/UNHCR

**5** This family of five lives in the Mt. Lebanon region of Lebanon. Only the mother, covered, faces the camera, the others look away for fear of punishment from the Syrian Government. The father has suffered an injury which leaves the oldest son to go to work. None of the children are in school though they wish to be. Although far from home, they are relieved to be out of Syria for now. Photo: E. Dorfman/UNHCR

"Since he [my son] was born there has been non-stop bombing everyday."





# HARD LABOUR

In Papua New Guinea, one of the riskiest things a woman can do is become a mother, but a new midwife program is saving lives.



19 823

Number of additional supervised births in PNG in 2012, supported by Australian aid





**F**or every 100 000 births in Papua New Guinea (PNG), it's estimated up to 730 mothers die during labour or soon after. In Australia, the figure is just eight maternal deaths per 100 000 births. These figures are heartbreaking but having a skilled birth attendant present at every birth could save these women.

In PNG there is a critical shortage of maternal health workers, with only 152 midwives currently practising. AusAID is funding a range of programs to educate a new generation of Papua New Guinean midwives.

One of these is the Maternal and Child Health Initiative (MCHI), run out of the University of Technology in Sydney through the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development. In partnership with the PNG National Department of Health and PNG World Health Organization, Director Caroline Homer, along with her colleague Michele Rumsey, work to improve the quality of teaching and learning at all midwifery schools in PNG.

"One of the things that has been consistently lacking in PNG is strong midwifery education," says Caroline. "There's been a shift in global thinking about maternal and infant deaths. Twenty years ago we trained 'traditional birth attendants' thinking that would solve it and then 10 years ago we trained all sorts of other people—nurses, community health workers as well as some midwives."

However, according to Caroline, not enough midwives in PNG are suitably educated or working in a regulated system. In 2011, the United Nations Family Population Fund (UNFPA) released a report showing there was only one midwife available for every 1000 births in PNG. "The average for the 58 poorest countries is six midwives per 1000 births, so PNG is a long way from that," she says.


In response, the MCHI is increasing the standards of midwifery clinical teaching and practice at four universities (in Port Moresby, Central Province, Goroka and Madang). AusAID has paid for new buildings and clinics at the universities as well as equipment, library resources and internet access. Eight international 'clinical midwifery facilitators' and two obstetricians have been engaged to work alongside local midwifery educators.

Many students have also been funded through AusAID's Australia Awards scholarships which pay their tuition and board, allowing nurses from some of the poorest communities in PNG to access education.

Thanks to these initiatives, 111 new midwives were trained in PNG in 2011 and 2012 and it is expected over 100 will graduate this year.

Because many work in isolated areas, often with no doctors close by, midwives in PNG require a unique skillset. They must be prepared to perform procedures that an obstetrician would undertake in Australia, such as vacuum extractions, delivering twin babies and assisting breech births.

Caroline, a practising midwife herself, is full of praise for the "huge heart, huge courage" of her students.

"Thankfully in Australia maternal deaths are foreign to most midwives whereas in PNG, sadly, that happens. It's terrifying for a midwife to be faced with the prospect of a mother dying in childbirth. These students have decided they don't want to go through that any more. They want to be able to change that." 

**SOPHIE GORDON**



#### IN PROFILE: FLORENCE WEST

*Florence West is a Clinical Midwifery Facilitator at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU) on the outskirts of Port Moresby. Originally from Brisbane, she has been living in PNG with her husband and five-year-old son for just over a year.*

"A typical day starts at about 7am, I'll leave the house and drive 25 kilometres out of Port Moresby to the PAU campus with a security escort. From 8am I'll start work which might be assisting our national counterparts giving lectures and tutorials or writing exam questions and marking assignments.

We also supervise students doing their clinical practice at Port Moresby General Hospital which can be a challenging environment to work in. It has a very busy 24-bed labour ward and sometimes there are only two midwives working on a shift. They really appreciate having our students there to help out.

I have worked as a midwifery adviser in Africa, Asia and the Middle East before but the (health) workforce shortage and the low status of women here in PNG really shocked me. There is even a problem here in terms of the way women are treated when they access healthcare.

This year, for the first time, we have (five) male students in our course out at PAU. Having more men as midwives is only going to benefit the profession here in PNG. It's still a very patriarchal society and a lot of men have the final say over access to healthcare and resource allocation, not only in the family but in institutions as well. So having some well-trained male midwives providing women-centred care will just be great.

The women patients here are just so tough. They do it without pain relief and without complaining and they just get on with it, so it's given me a different perspective on birth and birthing which has been really interesting for my own professional practice. The students themselves are just so highly motivated. They really believe they are going to make a difference to reduce maternal and newborn deaths and I truly believe they will too."

ABOVE: Florence West training midwives at the Pacific Adventist University on the outskirts of Port Moresby, PNG. Photo: Ness Kerton/AusAID

LEFT: A mother in PNG looks over her newborn twins. Thanks to the MCHI the dangers of twin deliveries will be reduced in PNG. Photo: Caroline Homer



ABOVE: When collecting water, women from the local community in Koyra, Bangladesh must walk across an area of barren ground that has been contaminated with saline after cyclone Aila struck in 2009. Photo: WaterAid/GMB Akash Panos

Water is life. Without clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and water to grow food, life is tenuous. Water is a critical resource for food security, for jobs and livelihoods. Water is essential for a healthy and productive life, and investing in water is a key weapon in the fight against poverty.





Around 780 million people still live without access to basic drinking water and more than two billion people have water supplies that are not safe or reliable. Sanitation remains a major challenge. Globally it is a lagging MDG target—around 1.1 billion people still defecate in the open and another 1.4 billion have toilets which are unsatisfactory. Achieving universal coverage of water and sanitation will have major impacts on the quality of life of the poorest.

But managing water is an increasing balancing act. People need water for a myriad of reasons—food production, drinking, supply

of clean energy and the provision of sustainable water and sanitation services. There are conflicting needs and interests—of governments, cities and towns, producers such as farmers and fishers and the health of ecosystems. Add to that issues such as equitable access to water, managing climate change and water availability affecting crucial decisions on economic growth and sustainability, and you have a potent mix.

Water management is a global challenge. That is why the UN General Assembly declared 2013 the International Year of Water Cooperation. Working together,

sharing expertise, conducting and disseminating world-class research, building capacity across borders and recognising shared goals—this is the necessary global future for water management.

Australia is a global leader in water resource management and Australian expertise is supporting transformational changes in water governance in places like southern Africa, the Mekong region and South Asia. The lives of millions of people are being transformed and saved through water and sanitation programs, and sustainable water management. Here are some of their stories.



# SOUTH ASIA— DIVERSITY, COMPLEXITY, OPPORTUNITY

**S**outh Asia is home to the world's largest concentration of poor people—more than 500 million people in the region live on less than \$1.25 a day. It has the highest population density of any region in the world and contains four of the ten most climate vulnerable countries—Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal.


The region also has a diverse, unique and fragile ecosystem ranging from the heights of Mount Everest to the Sundarbans on the Bay of Bengal which is the world's largest mangrove system. The region is also host to numerous rare species, including the snow leopard, Bengal tiger and Gangetic dolphin.

Natural disasters are frequent. Half of South Asia's people have been affected by at least one natural disaster in the past two decades. A wide range of climate change impacts are anticipated or have already begun in the region, from accelerated glacier melt to sea-level rise.

In the last year alone, nearly 33 million people in the region were affected by floods and droughts. Hard-won gains can be wiped away in moments and take years to recover, leaving the very poor behind again and again.

These factors create unique challenges when it comes to water management. Fertile flood plains support South Asia's 1.7 billion people (over a quarter of the world's population) but living and working on land that is frequently flooded comes at a cost. It's the poor who are most affected by floods, droughts, water stress and contamination.

Water is at the heart of both development and gender issues. Women and children in particular suffer from floods and water shortages, as they tend to be the first affected and are often the last to receive assistance.


In this, the International Year of Water Cooperation and into the future, Australia's development cooperation in South Asia is working with the countries of the region to unlock the potential of the region's water resources and reduce the risks from flooding and water shortages. Working strategically with partners in Australia and the region, AusAID is helping to improve food, water and energy security in South Asia. One of the ways we are doing this is by bringing together experts on water management and making sure information is shared across governments and regional institutions. Good decision-making based on good information has the potential to make a huge difference to millions of vulnerable people in the region, particularly women and girls. 

## South Asia Water Initiative

Australia is working with the World Bank and the UK and Norwegian Governments to promote regional cooperation and sustainable management of water resources in South Asia. Australia has supported the South Asia Water Initiative since 2009, and will provide \$12 million for activities through to 2016.

The South Asia Water Initiative is strengthening cross-border and national processes, building shared knowledge and improving relationships between national and regional institutions to improve water resource management. It will focus on building cooperation around four key locations—the Ganges Basin, Brahmaputra Basin, Indus Basin and the Sundarbans—as well as broader regional cooperation through the informal Abu Dhabi Dialogue that has been bringing water specialists in the region together since 2006.

Through the South Asia Water Initiative, Australia has funded the first strategic assessment of the Ganges Basin. This included an assessment of the social dimensions of climate change and a series of environmental and social impact studies in the Indian and Bangladeshi sections of the Sundarbans to help with co-management of this world heritage region. 'Knowledge products' like these highlight the importance of improving the management of trans-boundary water resources in the Himalayan river basins, and encourage cooperation between policymakers and governments.

Australian Dr Bill Young, former Director of the CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country Flagship, has recently been appointed as team leader for the South Asia Water Initiative and is now based in New Delhi. 

## RUSSELL ROLLASON AND DEBRA GROGAN

ABOVE RIGHT: Women from the village of Dokhandapur at the AusAID funded clean water supply. Photo: Russell Rollason/AusAID

RIGHT: People living in Koshi River Basin, Nepal. Photo: Nabin Baral/International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)







### CASE STUDY: Sharing Australia's expertise

The India-Australia Water Science and Technology Partnership brings water experts and policymakers from both countries together to address common problems and share expertise.

At the heart of the Partnership is the transfer of Australia's national water modelling platform, SOURCE, which was developed for Australia's Murray-Darling river basin. The basin, in common with many river basins in South Asia, spans a number of state boundaries. SOURCE was developed by a consortium of Australian governments, universities and technical institutions under the banner of eWater, and has been adopted by the Council of Australian Governments as the national hydrological modelling platform.

A pilot of SOURCE on India's Brahmani-Baitarani River Basin (with India's Ministry of Water Resources and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi) is about to start. Water specialists from CSIRO, eWater and other Australian organisations will work with their Indian counterparts to develop a plan that will help to predict water flows, flooding and shortages.



### CASE STUDY: Challenges of the Koshi

Australia's partnership with the CSIRO is helping to bring Australia's technical resources to areas of South Asia in need of water resources planning expertise and experience, including in the Koshi River Basin.

The Koshi River rises in China, crosses Nepal and empties into the Ganges River in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. In 2008, the failure of a river embankment on the Koshi River brought devastating floods and affected about 500 000 people in Nepal and 3.3 million people in the Indian state of Bihar.

These floods highlighted the dire need to reduce the vulnerability of the communities of the Koshi River Basin and help them to become more resilient to extreme weather events. The Koshi Basin contains important ecosystems and protected areas that provide a range of biodiversity and related ecosystem services, which sustain livelihoods. One of the major challenges in this area is

managing the river's heavy sediment load that can cause the river's banks to breach, resulting in widespread flooding.

Through a partnership with the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**, a regional intergovernmental organisation based in Kathmandu, Australia is bringing together technical contributions from CSIRO and eWater (including the SOURCE modelling tool). This will develop a basin-wide knowledge base and information sharing platform; propose options for improved agriculture in different geo-climatic subregions; and provide detailed case studies of the underlying causes and management options for a range of water hazards. These activities help to reduce the risk of flooding and improve the livelihoods of up to 50 million poor people who live in the basin by securing and sustaining freshwater ecosystem services for livelihoods and economic development.

**Water resources lie at the heart of poverty alleviation, economic development and geopolitical stability in the Mekong region. Peace, prosperity and security in the region are linked to choices about sharing, developing and managing these waters to produce food and energy, sustain livelihoods, and maintain vital ecosystems.**

# MEKONG WATER RESOURCES

The heart of Mekong region development

**T**he iconic Mekong River flows for 4800 kilometres through six countries (China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam). The Mekong is only one of the major river systems of the region; others include the Ayeyarwady, Salween, Chao Phraya and Red.

The Australian Mekong Water Resources Program has been working to promote sustainable water resources management in the Mekong region since 2007. It was established in recognition of the importance of water resources to Asia's development and because Australia is well placed to collaborate and share the experience of managing our own waterways, such as the Murray–Darling rivers system, including successes and ongoing difficulties.

Around 70 million people depend on the Mekong River and its tributaries, either directly or indirectly for their livelihoods. As with anywhere else, wise management is essential to maintain the health of the rivers and the quality of life of the people that rely on them.

The regional focus of Australia's program reflects the reality that choices made in each country about using and sharing transboundary waters will have impacts beyond their immediate borders. Across the region many water resource projects have been completed, are underway, or are being planned. Dams, river diversions, inter-basin transfers, thirsty cities and irrigation expansion are all in the mix.

While some projects have been celebrated, others have created tensions that can exacerbate other destabilising forces in the region.

The Australian Mekong Water Resources Program focuses on improving water resources governance in the region. This is being achieved through building the capacity of Mekong partners to manage water resources more sustainably, boosting the level and quality of available knowledge and by supporting transparent decision-making. Fairer and more effective governance of the region's water resources will go some way to alleviating the poverty that results from inequitable and unsustainable resource exploitation.

## Work so far

Examples of the program's work includes:

- > supporting the negotiation of new water resources policies and institutional reforms in Laos and Cambodia.
- > significant capacity building for state and non-state bodies through professional development, fellowships, technical assistance and twinning partnerships. For example, in 2011 and 2012, 53 water governance fellowships were awarded to develop local expertise. This will help meet a key challenge for the Mekong Region of developing local water experts.

ABOVE: Vientiane sunset  
Photo: KG Hortle




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Across the region many water resource projects have been completed, are underway, or are being planned. Dams, river diversions, inter-basin transfers, thirsty cities and irrigation expansion are all in the mix.

.....

- > convening national and regional policy dialogues to tackle poverty-related water-food-energy challenges.
- > protocols targeting triple bottom line sustainability have been piloted with developers, financiers, governments and civil society organisations to improve accountability of decision-making and the quality of water resources infrastructure.
- > support is provided to the inter-government Mekong River Commission—mandated by the 1995 Mekong Agreement—that commits the four Lower Mekong countries to cooperate in sharing the water and related resources of the Mekong River Basin.

### In the future

The partnership of the Australian Mekong Water Resources Program continues to grow as we build on the work already completed and look to respond to new challenges facing the region. 

**JOHN DORE** (Senior Regional Water Resources Specialist),  
**RACHEL JOLLY** (Program Manager) and **SOMSANITH MOUNPHOXAY** (Program Officer).

### IN FOCUS: Working with Cambodia and China

In 2013 a new trilateral Cambodia-Australia-China Irrigation Dialogue is being established. The Dialogue will:

- > promote exchange of knowledge and experience about irrigated agriculture and its contribution to food security and economic growth
- > scrutinise the development philosophy and practice being used to rationalise irrigation investment in each country, and assess the impacts on poverty of current irrigation investment practice in Cambodia
- > explore the feasibility of further collaboration to assist Cambodia's irrigation sector provide greater benefits to the rural poor and the development of the country
- > create increased understanding of Australian and Chinese development cooperation systems, grounded in our shared experiences with Cambodia.

### IN PROFILE: Future water governance leader



Ms Chou Chea began her working life as a journalist in Phnom Penh before moving to the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) focusing on teaching media and communications.

Her enquiring mind then took her into a policy research role with the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, where she has been sharpening her social research skills.

In 2012 Chou was awarded an AusAID-funded research fellowship by the Mekong Program on Water Environment and Resilience (M-POWER) regional research network. Chou's work is exploring problematic tensions in the function of Farmer Water User Communities and will inform essential re-negotiations between farmers and government. The M-POWER fellowship provides operating expenses for young independent researchers, mentoring, and new connections to a regional network focused on improving local, national and transboundary water governance.



# WATER COURSES

**Australia Awards Scholarships are designed to build skills and knowledge to help our development partners with their own development priorities.**

**Australia Awards recipients from more than 30 developing countries are studying water-related courses at Australian universities with AusAID's support.**

## **Arica Hill and Fathimah (Nisthu) Nistharan**

*Masters of Environment (Sustainable Development), Bond University*

In March this year, Australia's Gold Coast experienced some of the worst beach erosion for decades. Battered by extreme weather, the beaches had all but disappeared. For two international science students from Bond University, the devastation provided a firsthand lesson in how to tackle similar degradation in their own countries.

Fathimah (Nisthu) Nistharan and

Arica Hill are Australia Awards Scholars studying the Masters of Environment (Sustainable Development). Each has a special reason for pursuing their studies in Australia.

Arica Hill is her country's sole Environmental Education Officer, and in some ways her nation's future rests in her hands. Her beautiful home, the small Caribbean country of Antigua and Barbuda, known as 'the land of 365 beaches', faces serious problems. Soil erosion is reducing agricultural yields and releasing chemicals into the sea. Coral bleaching and rubbish and sewerage management threaten the marine environment. Arica's task will be to reverse these problems through public education programs.

Arica selected the Bond University program because it offered field trips and one-on-one engagement. "I get to see the practicality of what I am studying. That stands out for me and I'm learning from real professionals." She believes she will return home brimming with good ideas and plans. "AusAID is awesome. As an Australia Awards Scholar supported by AusAID, I have an obligation to take home what I have learned."

For Nisthu Mistharan from the Maldives, she hopes her Australia Award will give her the skills to tackle



the serious threats that beach erosion presents to her beautiful country's buoyant tourism industry and to its fisheries. The Maldives spreads over a vast area of the Indian Ocean, and is made up of 1192 coral atolls surrounded by crystal clear lagoons. About 80 per cent of the country is less than one metre above sea level. It is very vulnerable to climate change and the devastating tsunami of 2004 caused greater loss of life on a per capita basis than any other country.

**PROFESSOR TOR HUNDLOE,**  
Field Trip Co-ordinator, Environment (Sustainable Development) Program, Bond University, Gold Coast, Australia.

**TOP:** Professor Tor Hundloe with Masters students Eric Fru Zama, Craig Page, Fathimath Nistharan and Arica Hill studying beach erosion on the Gold Coast, Queensland. Photo: David Clark/NewsPix

**ABOVE:** Fathimah Nistharan (left) and Arica Hill. Photo: Tor Hundloe





ABOVE: Thakur Thapa Magar at University of Queensland. Photo: Hendrik Sipahutar

**Thakur Thapa Magar**  
*Masters of Integrated Water Management, University of Queensland.*


Thakur Thapa Magar, from Nepal, explains why he wants to be a leader in the water sector.

"When I was doing my Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering, I came to realise that in spite of having huge potential for economic growth through effectively using available water resources, Nepal was not capitalising on the opportunity. I decided then and there to devote myself to working in the water sector to help change that.

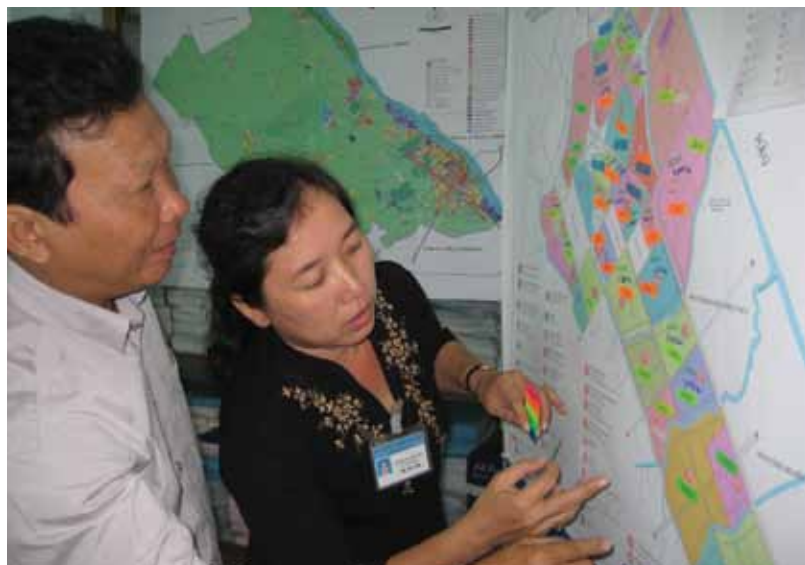
I began working with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal, helping to provide access to safe drinking water and irrigation facilities for more than 20 000 people in eight hilly districts of Nepal. But I knew I wanted to do more.

I wanted to help bring economic prosperity for Nepalese people by becoming a leader in the water sector, locally and internationally. To do this I needed more knowledge, and I found the perfect way to gain it, in Australia.

I was overjoyed to receive an Australia Awards Scholarship to go to the University of Queensland and study at the International Water Centre. I am learning how to improve policies and implementation modalities for boosting economic prosperity for Nepalese people through integrated approaches to the sustainable and equitable use of water in Nepal.

I sincerely believe that my Australia Award will add great value to my professional career and have profound impacts on my population." 

# SMALL CHANGE, BIG DIFFERENCE




**W**hen it comes to water-borne illnesses, all it can take to turn a clean glass of water into a source of deadly disease is one drop. The smallest changes can make dramatic differences.

Fortunately, for several years now, AusAID-funded research has been working to uncover new solutions—both big and small—that are increasing access to safe water and sanitation and making a real difference for the health and economic opportunities in developing countries.

Our water-related research has covered topics ranging from the economic effects of water pollution on the craft villages of Vietnam, to the impact of climate change vulnerability assessments on the water and health policy options available to countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

In 2011, ground-breaking wastewater research in Vietnam by the Institute for Sustainable Futures won the Applied Research award from the International Water Association. Funded through the AusAID Development Research Awards Scheme (ADRAS), this research applied for the first time a combined cost-effectiveness and sustainability measure that assessed possible wastewater infrastructure options. The findings have helped the people and local government of Can Tho, Vietnam to identify and implement sanitation solutions that are relevant to their community context and resources.

In 2013, 50 new research teams began work on a range of development challenges through the latest round of the ADRAS. Over \$6.2 million was awarded for water, sanitation and hygiene-specific research. Projects include examining the way that civil society organisations in South-East Asia can facilitate private sector involvement in water and sanitation services for the poor, and developing guidance on understanding the demand for rural water and sanitation services in Pacific countries.

These new projects will add to the evidence base of data, information and insights that have been built through research supported by AusAID. They are also demonstrating that good ideas—no matter whether big or small—can make a dramatic difference. 

**MATT CLANCY**

ABOVE: Detailed planning with local government infrastructure staff in Can Tho, Vietnam. Photo: Matt Clancy

# BULAWAYO BOWSER

Thanks to a unique water project, children in Zimbabwe's second largest city no longer have to play near open sewers

**U**p until five years ago, waking to burst sewer pipes was a daily occurrence for the residents of Bulawayo.

In 2008, at the height of the water and sewer challenges faced by Zimbabwe's second largest city, the situation was so bad that raw sewage flowed into backyards. This posed serious health risks at a time when the country was grappling with cholera.

"It was disgusting to say the least," says 63 year old Bulawayo resident Mbuya Chihururu. "I live near a main road and we had to stare at flowing sewage day in and day out."

"Imagine, I had six primary school children. You had to constantly be on guard every time they were playing outside ... Rats also compounded the situation as they invaded the sewers and would come to our houses with bacteria posing a further health risk."


Today, Mbuya Chihururu's children can play freely outside thanks to

a unique and pioneering project developed by AusAID together with two NGO's (World Vision and Dabane Trust) and the Bulawayo City Council.

Launched in 2010 as an emergency intervention with the specific objective of improving water and sanitation, the Bulawayo Water and Sanitation Emergency Response (BOWSER) project has since benefited more than 450 000 residents. Some 1200 water leaks have been repaired and 250 kilometres of sewerage pipe blockages have been cleared. In order to improve sanitation in the city, BOWSER has rehabilitated elevated outfall sewers at four sites in Bulawayo.

"We have noted a number of changes since the clearing," says Mbuya Chihururu. "These include our ability to breathe fresh air and having our children play outside without worrying. We are also able to cultivate our pieces of land which are close to our houses as the raw sewage has dried up."

Having realised the importance of raising awareness among residents on the proper care and maintenance of the sewer and water systems, the BOWSER team conducted a number of community 'road shows'. Through music, dance and theatre, residents were encouraged to pay their bills so that the City of Bulawayo would be able to maintain the rehabilitated water and sewer systems.

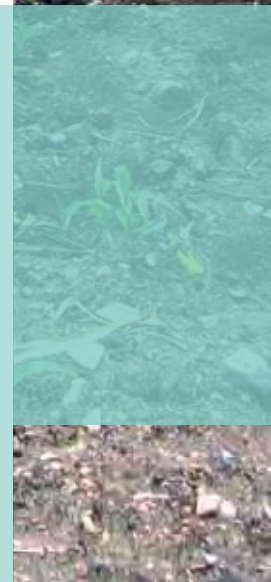
New information technology equipment was installed at the Bulawayo City Council to improve the billing system as well as mapping the sewer lines, mainlines, manholes and outflow sewers. A call centre, the first of its kind by a local authority in Zimbabwe, was also commissioned as part of the project to help the Bulawayo City Council respond to customer queries and reports on burst sewers. 

**LEONARD MAKOMBE,  
WORLD VISION ZIMBABWE**



ABOVE (L TO R): Local contractors replace water and sewer pipes; roadshows raise awareness of new water systems; the new equipment is a stark contrast to the rusting systems used before. Photos: Leonard Makombe/WVI

OPPOSITE: Children could be seen playing close to raw sewage flowing from burst pipes. Photo: Leonard Makombe/WVI





## CONFERENCES ON WATER— GET INVOLVED

Australia is a global leader in all aspects of water conservation, from water recycling to catchment and ecosystem health restoration, systems integration, the design of smart water technologies and water sensitive urban design.

The International Water Centre (IWC), based in Brisbane, leads the way, and provides education and training, applied research and knowledge services to develop capacity in integrated water resource management around the world. It is now set to host two very important events.

### **The 16th International Riversymposium, Brisbane, September 23–26, 2013.**

The *Riversymposium* will this year explore holistic approaches to environmental management, bringing the interconnected issues of food, water and energy security to the fore. AusAID sponsors delegates to attend from as far afield as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa.

**Registration is now open at [www.riversymposium.com](http://www.riversymposium.com).**

### **The fourth AusAID WASH conference, Brisbane, March 24–28, 2014.**

The WASH (or water, sanitation and hygiene) conference series has brought together WASH practitioners from all over the world since 2006. The theme for WASH 2014 is 'Water, sanitation and hygiene for everyone, everywhere' and the conference will explore how members of the WASH sector can work together internationally to find new ways to achieve universal access to clean water, and adequate sanitation and hygiene services.

Conference sessions and training workshops around the themes of equitable access, universal services, achieving health outcomes with WASH and sustaining services and outcomes will be held over a week-long program.

WASH practitioners from civil society, government and industry, aid donors and academia are encouraged to attend. Registration is open now.

**More information is available at [www.watercentre.org/events/wash2014](http://www.watercentre.org/events/wash2014)**

### **CASE STUDY: Clean Delhi, healthy Delhi**

WaterAid in India (WAI) is working in New Delhi, India on the Swachh Dilli Swasth Dilli (Clean Delhi, Healthy Delhi) program in partnership with four local NGOs. The program aims to enable poor people in slums to demand and realise their right to water and sanitation at standards which are equitable and sustainable.

Supported by Australian Government funding it addresses local challenges by delivering improved knowledge of good hygiene practices and building upon models of citizens action to advocate for improved standards of water and sanitation services, and by monitoring the services provided. Using these models the project will influence change in the practice and policies of local government to ensure better delivery of basic services to the poor.

From 1 January 2012 to 30 March 2014 the program will reach 25 000 people and result in positive outcomes including service providers with increased knowledge and capacity to respond to water and sanitation needs in slum areas. This includes the hygiene needs of women and girls who will benefit through menstrual hygiene management plans.

WaterAid is an international NGO with a mission to transform lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene, and sanitation in the world's poorest communities.

**MARCUS HOWARD, AusAID WATER SECTOR SPECIALIST**

.....  
**Before the Bulawayo  
BOWSER project,  
children could be  
seen playing near  
open sewers**  
.....



# TURNING ON THE TAP

**F**or years, Arbainah, a 34-year-old from Indonesia's Kalimantan province, paid her neighbours for fresh water for drinking and cooking. Water costs Rp200 per bucket. While this is equivalent only to two cents in Australian dollars, with more than five buckets needed each day, the cost quickly adds up for people like Arbainah, who makes a very modest living selling fried food on the streets of Banjarmasin. For bathing, she and her family used water from the river running in front of their home. This water is often dirty, and her children suffered skin ailments and diarrhoea. "I was very afraid for my children's health," Arbainah says.

Nurseha, a housewife and mother of two in Padang, faced similar challenges. The water supply she relied on became yellow and dirty after an earthquake hit Padang in 2009. Nurseha was forced to carry water from a nearby mosque several times a day, and the supply sometimes ran out.

Now water is piped directly to the homes of Arbainah and Nurseha for their cooking, drinking and cleaning needs. Their families' health is improved, and the women no longer have to spend valuable time queuing or searching for clean water. "I'm grateful," Nurseha says. "Now water is always available at home, even in the dry season."

The water has been made available under the Water and Sanitation Hibah (grant) program, a Government of Indonesia initiative supported by Australia, to provide clean water and piped sewers to low income communities in urban areas by providing incentive grants to local governments.

The Water and Sanitation Hibah program is based on a simple but innovative model. It encourages local governments to invest in their water and sanitation services through their water utilities. A grant is given for each new connection made by a utility, after it is verified that the households have paid the water bill for at least two months and that the recipients are satisfied with the service.

"The Australian Government supports Water and Sanitation Hibah because everybody benefits—local governments, water utilities and poor households," says the head of AusAID in Indonesia, James Gilling.


"We see that people who have already received a water connection have more time, more energy, lower expenses, better health and more economic opportunities because they no longer have to buy bottled water or cart water long distances."

The program recently entered its second phase, to which Australia has allocated \$80 million, and which will bring safe water to approximately 1.4 million people.

Indonesia aims to achieve 68 per cent urban piped water coverage and 20 per cent rural piped water coverage by 2015 as part of its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. This is an ambitious target, and requires the combined effort of all stakeholders, including donors. By supporting Water and Sanitation Hibah, Australia is supporting Indonesia's efforts to achieve this, and, by extension, other Millennium Development Goals, including increasing gender equity, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, combating water borne diseases, and improving the environment. **F**

**CAROL WALKER**

Photo: Josh Estey/AusAID

- > The first phase of Water Hibah provided new water connections to 77 000 households in one year
  - > Approximately 385 000 people benefited through the participation of 34 local governments
  - > About 5000 households received access to piped sewers
  - > Australia has allocated \$5 million to make approximately 9000 sewerage connections over the period to 2015.
- 



# 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF RAMSI



The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a partnership between the people and government of Solomon Islands and 15 contributing countries of the Pacific region. On 24 July it celebrated its tenth anniversary.

After years of ethnic tensions, the problems facing Solomon Islands were serious. Law and order had broken down, with people subjected to intimidation and violence. The government and its institutions had ceased to function effectively. Corruption was widespread. Public finances were in ruin and many basic services like health and education were not being delivered to the people.

The Australian-led RAMSI began in July 2003 at the request of the then Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Sir Allan Kemakeza, to bring peace and

stability in Solomon Islands. Since then, Australia has contributed more than \$2 billion through RAMSI military, police and development cooperation programs to restore peace in the Pacific nation.

In July this year, RAMSI celebrated its 10th anniversary. With military personnel leaving the country, RAMSI became a police-focused mission for a further four years.

The milestone also signalled the transfer of RAMSI development programs to the Solomon Islands–Australia Partnership for Development.

Programs in justice services, elections and public sector management transferred to the expanded partnership to support the Solomon Islands Government's efforts to deliver health and education services, promote rural development, support transport infrastructure and maintain macro-economic stability.

**LOU ANDERSON**

ABOVE: In the effort to restore peace and security in the Solomon Islands almost 4000 weapons were surrendered and destroyed. Photo: Brian Hartigan, RAMSI

**IN FOCUS: RAMSI achievements**

- > Restored peace and security in Solomon Islands and facilitated the surrender of almost 4000 weapons
- > Strengthened the capacity of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force to resume responsibility for front-line policing
- > Trained 90 per cent of police officers in Operational Safety Training, trained officers in Public Order Management and established sustainable train-the-trainer programs in these disciplines
- > Constructed 146 police houses and seven Provincial Police Headquarters
- > Rebuilt central government agencies so the government could deliver services to the people
- > Promoted equitable access to justice services through a functioning court system and supported work of the Public Solicitor and the Director of Public Prosecutions
- > Established a new family protection unit to help women affected by domestic violence
- > Restored macro-economic stability with the budget and revenue sources by introducing reforms to manage the debt to GDP ratio which fell from unsustainably high rates to a manageable 14 per cent in 2012.

RIGHT: Children in Solomon Islands read a brochure on RAMSI. Photo: RAMSI

**CASE STUDY: The law in practice****Building the case for confidence**

Linda Folaumoetui once served as Solicitor-General in Tonga. For the last four years she has been an adviser to the Attorney-General's chambers in Solomon Islands, providing legal advice to government departments and representing the State in litigation cases. She also helps her colleagues strengthen their skills in areas such as researching case law, drafting legal opinions and trial techniques.

For Mrs Folaumoetui, her biggest achievement is the relationships she has with her team and the growth she has seen in their confidence and capacity to do their jobs.

Her irrepressible smile and can-do attitude have won over her Solomon Islands counterparts.

"Linda has given me the confidence to stand up and talk in court," says John Muria, a senior crown counsel with the Attorney-General's Chambers. "I used to be hesitant about going to court and would get butterflies. But she always gives me a confidence boost and tells me I can do it; she pushes me, and now I can."

For Mrs Folaumoetui, it is the diversity of Solomon Islands that has made her life so memorable.

"Solomon Islands has a rich and diverse culture—there are Polynesians, Micronesians and Melanesians, and I am amazed by the ability of everyone to live and work together for the place they all call home."


**Prosecuting change in Solomon Islands**

Walk into a courtroom in Solomon Islands today and you are most likely to see Solomon Islands judges listening to Solomon Islands lawyers leading cases.

It is a dramatic change from just a few years ago, when, in the early days of RAMSI, scores of international lawyers dominated the country's courts after years of neglect and the breakdown of the rule of law during the 'Tensions'.

This turn-around is partly the result of the efforts of people like Fijian prosecutor Andie Driu and her predecessors, who have gradually helped to strengthen local skills and knowledge as part of RAMSI's efforts to help Solomon Islanders rebuild confidence in their country's justice system.

"Advisers are stepping back now," explains Ms Driu who, with 15 years of legal experience in Fiji, Australia and the Marshall Islands, recently finished her placement in the Solomon Islands Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

"Two years ago, advisers still had a lead role in most cases. Solomon Islands prosecutors are now taking the lead in coordinating cases in the courts, not only in the Magistrate's Court, but in the High Court, the Court of Appeal and with the provincial circuit courts." 

**ERIN GLEESON**





# MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BATLEY

**F**rom 2004–2006, James Batley, now AusAID's Deputy Director General, Country Programs Group, was Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.

One of his defining memories is watching one of his young security guards graduate from the police force. The ambitions of the young man, who worked at Mr Batley's house in Honiara, showed that public confidence in its public institutions was returning.

"He was clearly inspired by what was happening in his country and he said to me, 'I want to join the police force'." Mr Batley gave him a reference and paid his mother's fare to come by boat from Malaita to attend the graduation ceremony.

"It was a really special moment to see this kid in his uniform marching out and his parents were just bursting with pride," Mr Batley says. "And it really summed up to me that there was a real sense of hope in

Solomons and that young people were prepared to buy into that idea of rebuilding."

On a return visit earlier this year, Mr Batley tracked down his friend, and found he was still in the police force and had completed more training. "That's personally very rewarding, to know he's still there," he says.

When Mr Batley first arrived as Special Coordinator, RAMSI was just emerging from the first phase of its operation. Security had been restored, nearly 4000 weapons had been confiscated or surrendered, and Solomon Islanders were able to go about their lives free from intimidation and violence.

As Mr Batley explains it, the challenge was to put in place a longer term strategy for recovery. "We hadn't come to replace the government of Solomon Islands," Mr Batley said. "We were there to restore really basic functions of government and help them to function better, and to rebuild public confidence."

One of his proudest moments was the decision of all 15 of Solomon Islands' neighbours in the Pacific Islands Forum to contribute personnel to the operation. Even small nations such as Tuvalu and Niue contributed police officers.


"It was such a vote of confidence," he says. "RAMSI stands as one of the best examples we have of the region coming together to address a regional problem."

Speaking on the eve of RAMSI's 10th anniversary, Mr Batley reflected on the operation's successes, which include restoring confidence and hope in the country's future, rebuilding government finances and revenue, and removing weapons and reducing crime.

Mr Batley says many development challenges still remain, with youth unemployment high, and with more than 900 islands and dispersed communities, service delivery remains very difficult.



But, he says, the country is in a better position to face these challenges, with greater capacity, stronger institutions and increasing revenue giving Solomon Islands choices about its future.

"It's in the hands of the people of Solomon Islands now." 

**MEAGHAN SHAW**

ABOVE: James Batley spreads the RAMSI message in a meeting with Chief Moro, a traditional leader on Weather Coast of Guadalcanal. Photo: AusAID

MARIE HAGA

# GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST



Marie Haga is the Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust—an independent, international organisation working to conserve the diversity of the major food crops around the globe. On a recent visit to Australia, she spoke to *Focus* about the importance of crop diversity and what the Trust is doing to preserve it.

## Why is crop diversity important?

Agriculture is probably facing its most profound challenge ever. In the next 10 years we will be one billion more people on earth and that's going to require an increased agricultural production of approximately 15 per cent. In 2050 we will probably be nine billion people and we will have to increase food production by 60 per cent.

That is a tremendous task and it doesn't come automatically and I think it's also right to say that it's not optional. Because we all know what food shortage means. That means social unrest, that means famine and it is the poor who will suffer even more.

Agriculture has to adapt and they have to have the options that crop diversity gives us in order to adapt.

## How has crop diversity changed over the years?

We know that diversity is disappearing to a large extent, unfortunately.

We can use one example. In the United States, back in 1900 there were 7100 varieties of apples and that is documented. Today there are one thousand varieties of apples in the United States.

Recently I met a woman and I told her this and she said, 'Wow, do we have a thousand varieties of apples in the US, isn't that great?' And I said, 'Yes, that's fine but the trouble is you've lost 6100 varieties and it might be that one of those varieties that you have lost forever might have had traits that would be terribly important to fight disease which might come in 10, 20, 40 years, which might have been terribly important to avoid a pest, which might have been terribly important to adjust apple production to higher temperatures.'

This is really what it is all about. It is conserving the options for the future. And that is why this work is so important.

## What is the Trust doing to meet this challenge?

We are working on developing a rational, cost effective system to make sure that this diversity of crops is being taken care of forever.

.....

**This is the ultimate backup that we have on earth for safe keeping the seeds. If everything goes wrong you can always go to Svalbard and find this diversity.**

.....

We have contributed to building a seed vault in Svalbard (an island 1300 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle). If you go from the little town up into the mountains, two kilometres away you will find a door. You walk 130 metres into the mountain and there you come to a huge vault.

What is there? 781 000 varieties of seed—seeds from all over the world. Approximately 100 countries have sent seeds to Svalbard.

This is the ultimate backup that we have on earth for safe keeping the seeds. If everything goes wrong you can always go to Svalbard and find this diversity.

## In our own region a number of crop species are at risk, what is the trust doing in the Asia-Pacific region?

We do work on many crops in the South Pacific. We could use one example which is coconuts. We produce approximately 50 billion coconuts a year. That's a lot of coconuts.

Coconut is actually now at risk—probably because of climate change, the temperature increase and water levels rising and we are

now working on projects to figure out what on earth is happening to coconuts and coconut production.

Some of the best scientists we can find are working on this and we contribute to that. We don't know what the answer is but we do know that the answer lies in diversity. It's only by looking at the diversity that we have out there in the world, in other places of the world that we can solve this problem and that is just one example. 📍

## KATIE LALOR

**The Australian Government, through AusAID, is an inaugural donor to the GCDT. Since 2003 it has committed \$20.9 million to the fund.**

**To find out more about the Global Crop Diversity trust go to [www.croptrust.org/](http://www.croptrust.org/)**

ABOVE: (L to R) Illuminated tunnel of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault Photo: Mari Tefre/GCDT; Beans from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) gene bank in Colombia. Photo: Neil Palmer/CIAT; Marie Haga. Photo: GCDT; Entrance to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Photo: Mari Tefre/GCDT



# SPOTLIGHT ON AFGHANISTAN

After more than a decade of international support, Afghanistan's development achievements are remarkable. But there is still much to do.

**A**fghanistan is part of South and West Asia with a population of more than 35 million people. It remains one of the poorest countries in the world and currently ranks 175 of 187 countries on the UN Human Development Index.

Life expectancy in the landlocked mountainous country is 49 years of age and around one in 10 children die before their fifth birthday. Almost nine million Afghans are illiterate and 30 per cent of school-aged children do not attend school. The country's human, physical and institutional infrastructure, long underdeveloped, has been crippled by over three decades of conflict. Access to basic services is severely limited, particularly in rural areas, where 20 per cent of households are food insecure. Gender inequality remains culturally entrenched. Afghanistan still ranks near the bottom of the United Nations Development Program Gender Inequality Index.

With the Government of Afghanistan and the international community, Australia has helped to enrol 7.7 million children in basic education, including 2.9 million girls. Between 2000 and 2010, the maternal mortality ratio (deaths during or within 42 days of pregnancy) is estimated to have dropped from 1000 deaths to 460 deaths per 100 000. Over 12 000 kilometres of rural roads have been rehabilitated, providing employment, transport links and access to markets for ordinary Afghans.

In 2012–13, Australia provided an estimated \$182.8 million in official development assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan.

The objective of Australia's aid to Afghanistan is to build the capacity of the Afghan Government to deliver basic services and provide its people with opportunities to earn a livelihood. This helps promote stability and provide a basis for longer-term growth. The Australian aid program in Afghanistan focuses on:

- > promoting opportunities for all —by supporting education and assisting national efforts to reduce violence against women
- > building sustainable economic development—by supporting agriculture and rural development, and effective governance of the mining sector
- > promoting effective governance —by investing in elections and human rights, enhancing public financial management and administration, and supporting security.

Australia will respond to humanitarian needs as required. We will focus assistance on the most vulnerable.

BACKGROUND IMAGE: Women in Deh Warda Village Khulm District. Photo: Madeline Wilson/Australian Red Cross



**57 000+**

Number of people directly supported with food rations across 34 provinces

## AGRICULTURE

### Agriculture and rural development

In recognition of Afghanistan's ongoing need to develop its rural economy, Australia's aid program is:

- > improving the basic food security and agricultural livelihoods of vulnerable rural communities
- > sustaining and improving the productivity of Afghan farming systems in water scarce environments
- > building the capacity of government agencies to service the agriculture sector.

While many of Australia's initiatives in rural development are new or just being implemented, they are already yielding results.

- > The World Bank's National Solidarity Program has reached more than 30 000 communities and distributed over 53 000 grants for small-scale development projects across the country.
- > Supporting the World Food Programme's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation has directly supported more than 57 000 people across 34 provinces with food rations.
- > Training in better agricultural practices and improved agricultural technologies has been provided for over 1600 farmers in Bamyan and Parwan provinces, including 713 women.

**3000+**

Number of students provided with community based education

## EDUCATION

### Empowerment through education

AusAID is working through CARE Australia to provide the Empowerment through Education Program, which provides community-based education for more than 8000 students with a focus on education for girls. The program develops the leadership potential of girls and women in remote communities, establishes Village Education Communities to increase engagement in education, and recruits and trains teachers.

In 2011, the program supported 2686 primary school students (79 per cent female), 212 lower secondary school students (100 per cent female), 110 primary school students (20 per cent female), and 30 lower secondary school teachers (37 per cent female).

## GENDER

### Ending violence against women

Australia is providing more than \$17 million for the Afghanistan Elimination of Violence Against Women Program. Australia's support will build on national efforts to provide services that will directly impact the lives of women affected by violence.

Initial priorities include working through Afghan civil society and women's organisations, to increase women's access to support services and justice and to strengthen violence prevention and advocacy activities.

**\$17m+**

Funds committed for the Afghanistan Elimination of Violence Against Women Program

LEFT: Panjshir River Basin, Afghanistan. Photo: Alex Treadway, The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)





### CASE STUDY: Early childhood development in Uruzgan

It is the most colourful house in the whole province. Flowers and hearts are painted all over its walls. This house is one of the very first kindergartens for Uruzgan in southern Afghanistan—one of 50 classes for more than 1000 children set up by the Children of Uruzgan program. Khala Bibi—Aunty Bibi—is the teacher here.

Children of Uruzgan's preschool groups give poor children from rural areas a better start in learning and life. Activities include structured play with toys

to help children develop basic concepts of shape, size, direction and volume, as well as skills in sorting, comparing or sequencing.

Every afternoon around 30 children come to Khala Bibi. She says she could have had many more children in the group. "Kindergartens are a new idea for Uruzgan, but they are very important. Everybody agrees. There are not enough schools so the children stand in the streets, get dirty and sick, and the only thing they learn is how to pick a fight. In the kindergarten,

they are safe. And they learn something."

Six out of ten children don't go to school in Uruzgan. This is why Khala Bibi also teaches her kids the alphabet and how to count. For many of them, it will be the only education they will ever get. For others, it will give them a head start in school.

The Children of Uruzgan program, supported by AusAID, is an ambitious four-year health and education program in one of Afghanistan's poorest provinces. The program is being delivered

in partnership with AusAID, Save the Children, national NGOs and the Government of Afghanistan and aims to enhance access to, the quality of and use of basic health and education services for children and their families in the districts of Uruzgan. **F**

#### TRACIE STARKEY

ABOVE: Khala Bibi, Early Childhood Development teacher, interacts with the children in a kindergarten in Uruzgan. Photo: Elissa Bogos/Save the Children



In 2006, *Focus* reported on a remarkably cost-effective AusAID-funded project that has since seen amazing results in reducing the devastating effects of iodine deficiency in Tibet

#### Then

Iodine is a trace element found in the sea and soil. It is vital for human development. In the late 1990's it was recognised that iodine deficiency disorders were severe in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Goitre (swelling of the thyroid gland associated with iodine deficiency) affected more than 30 per cent of the population. Cretinism was highly prevalent. More than 50 per cent of children were stunted in growth with an average IQ of 85.

From 2000 to 2004, AusAID supported the Iodine Deficiency Disorders Elimination Project with a \$2.5 million grant. Iodised oil capsules were distributed to infants and women of childbearing age and support was provided for the development of an iodised salt industry.

In those four years, more than 95 per cent of the target group was reached, protecting around 170 000 newborn babies from brain damage associated with iodine deficiency. As well, through



a targeted health education program, the use of iodised salt doubled despite initial resistance.

#### Now

Since the end of the project the TAR Government has continued to support the iodised oil capsule program and it's estimated that iodised salt is now available in 91 per cent of Tibet's farming and herding areas, a trebling of the initial take up rate.

A survey in 2008, supported by the Ministry of Health in Beijing, found that there were no children under the age of five in Tibet suffering from the iodine deficiency syndrome of cretinism.

"What it tells us is that over 300 000 babies have been protected from brain damage as a result of the AusAID funded initiative," says Professor Cres Eastman, an internationally noted expert on iodine deficiency from

the Sydney Medical School, who initiated the original project.

"While there have been no recent studies, we have also been told that goitre rates have fallen to less than five per cent."

The Sydney Medical School, together with China's Tianjin Medical School are currently sourcing funding for a follow up study to look at the IQ of children born in Tibet since the introduction of iodine.

#### 1990s


- > Goitre affected more than 30 per cent of the population
- > Cretinism was highly prevalent (from two to 13 per cent in rural villages)
- > More than five per cent of children were stunted in growth with an average IQ of 85.

#### 2000–2004

- > The number of Tibetans using iodised salt doubled

- > The iodised capsule program reached 95 per cent of women of childbearing age and infants
- > Goitre rates fell to 12 per cent.

#### 2013

- > Since 2004 the iodised oil program has been sustained by the TAR Government
- > 91.2 per cent of Tibetans are now using iodised salt
- > The rate of cretinism has been reduced to zero
- > Anecdotal evidence suggests goitre rates have fallen to less than five per cent. 

#### KATIE LALOR

ABOVE: A grandmother, who has suffered from iodine deficiency, nurses her grandson who has been protected from the consequences of iodine deficiency through the Iodine Deficiency Disorders Elimination Project in Tibet. Photo: Professor C.J. Eastman



# GLOBAL EDUCATION: PRECIOUS RESOURCES



## The importance of water as a resource in Australia and the world is recognised in the new Australian Geography Curriculum.

One of the aims of the new curriculum is "to ensure that students develop as informed, responsible and active citizens who can contribute to the development of an environmentally and economically sustainable and socially just world".


This provides an opportunity for teachers to explore global education in the classroom focusing on interdependence and

globalisation, identity and cultural diversity, social justice and human rights, peace building and conflict resolution and sustainability.

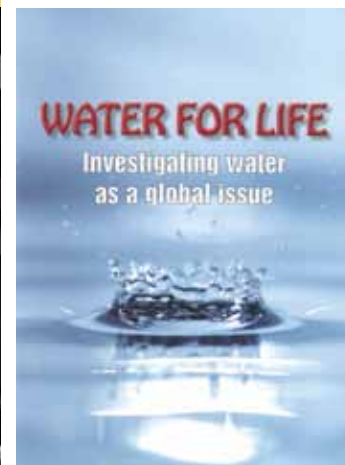
In the Year 7 unit, *Water in the world*, students will investigate:

- > the economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of water for people
- > how water connects places as it moves through the environment and the way this affects places
- > the quantity and variability of Australia's water resources compared with those in other continents

- > the nature of water scarcity and ways of overcoming it
- > the causes, impacts and responses to an atmospheric or hydrological hazard.

The subject will be investigated using studies drawn from Australia, Asia and/or North Africa. 

**The Global Education website has a number of resources, including case studies and teaching strategies, to help teachers explore issues about water in the classroom.**



## WATER FOR LIFE

The resource booklet, *Water for Life: Investigating water as a global issue* contains information and activities for students in year 7 to 10.

Engaging graphics and case studies from the Asia-Pacific region and Africa will help students develop their knowledge and understanding of water distribution, availability and use by people around the world.

Each chapter has suggested student activities for use in Geography classes.

Contact your local Global Education Project for a printed copy or download from the website [www.globaleducation.edu.au](http://www.globaleducation.edu.au)



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