

Indigenous
Community Services
Health
Education
Community Development
Justice & Advocacy
Refugees & Asylum Seekers
Eco Spirituality
Prayer & Presence
Ministry Support Services
Communications & Multimedia



INSTITUTE OF
SISTERS of MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Ministries



The Sisters of Mercy first came to Australia in 1846 and to Papua New Guinea in 1956. Dedicated to serving people who suffer from injustices related to poverty, sickness or lack of education, Sisters of Mercy have always endeavoured to respond to a range of local and global needs. For the sake of this mission, in December 2011, fifteen of the Mercy congregations formed the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG).

This reconfiguration brought together over nine hundred Sisters of Mercy and their associated ministries. These ministries range from large organisations employing thousands of people, to much smaller local concerns that may engage only a few. These works fall under the major mission areas of Indigenous, Community Services, Health, Education, Community Development, Justice and Advocacy, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Eco Spirituality, Prayer and Presence, Ministry Support Services, Communications and Multimedia.

“Whatever and wherever our ministry is, we are part of the one mercy mission, part of the ongoing mission of the compassionate Jesus. ”

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, Constitutions, 4.03



Indigenous

Sisters of Mercy have a long history of working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in regional, rural and urban areas, in policy think tanks and in advocacy networks. This work has been undertaken, in some parts of Australia, for over 100 years.

In the last 20 years, despite the best efforts of many, the socio-economic situation of Indigenous peoples and their rights to self-determination have improved very little. It is for this reason that ISMAPNG remains committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their struggle for justice and continues to work in partnership with these people in many ministries, recognising their special place both in Australian society, and in the heart of God.

“They have rational and immortal souls, created to the image and likeness of God.”

Ursula Frayne. Catherine Killerby, *Ursula Frayne A Biography*. p 139





Community Services

Community and social services are an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Mercy. In the earliest days it was carried out by the “walking nuns” who visited, comforted, fed and nursed the poor in their own homes.

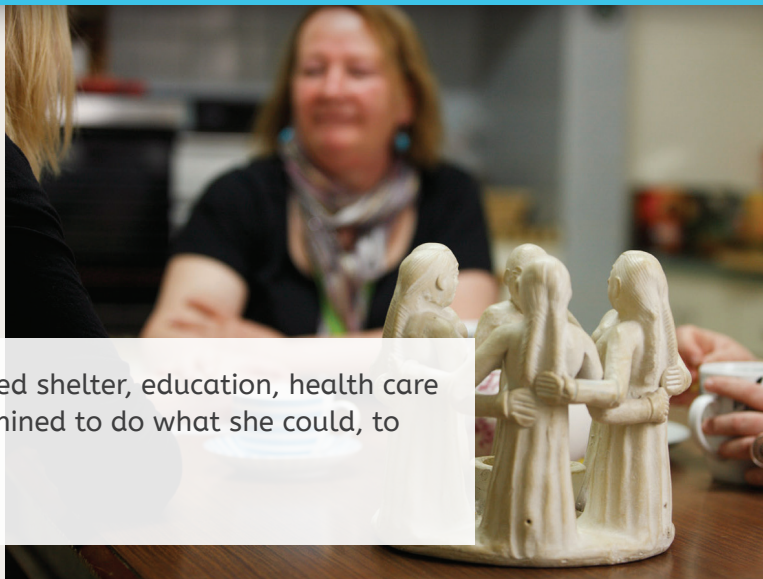
Today, Sisters and lay people through the ministries of ISMAPNG collaborate with those who have been pushed to the fringes and placed in powerless positions within society. They are engaged in a range of ministries to assist families, children, those with disabilities,

victims of domestic violence, those affected by drug and alcohol abuse, women and children who are homeless, those who are disabled and the elderly. Activities undertaken in the area of Community Services include providing crisis accommodation for women and children, helping to secure long term accommodation, employment programs, transport programs, visiting gaols and detention centres, community development programs, counselling and advocacy support.



“Catherine McAuley recognised that the poor needed shelter, education, health care and jobs. As she looked at the realities, she determined to do what she could, to relieve suffering and to build new possibilities.”

Joanna Regan RSM and Isabelle Keiss RSM, *Tender Courage*. p 7





Health

Inspired by the person and mission of Jesus, who embraced the world with compassion to bring justice and healing, Catherine McAuley sought to care for the poor, sick and dying in Dublin. Inspired by this mission of healing, ISMAPNG maintains significant involvement in the area of health care in Australia and overseas.

Health care is central to maintaining both human dignity and human flourishing. It is a vital contributor to individuals reaching their potential, and for their full participation in society. There are a variety of ways that ISMAPNG is involved in health care; both through

organisations whose primary focus is health care and as part of programs which include attentiveness to health and hygiene as a means to providing the opportunity for living a full life.

Areas of health care that ISMAPNG are involved in include maternity and specialist women's health care, early parenting support, health worker and birth attendant training, pre-school nutrition programs, acute and sub acute hospital care, aged care, mental health programs, palliative care, home and community care.



“There is something permanent in Catherine’s personal, tender care of the sick and dying: some true gospel instinct and virtue that is a permanent valid call to us.”

Mary Sullivan RSM, Catherine McAuley and the Care of the Sick (article).



Education

Catherine McAuley's commitment to education as a means of providing human dignity and self reliance saw her establish education programs modelled on the most up to date techniques of her time. She also provided vocational education programs for vulnerable women offering them opportunities for employment and income.

Since the earliest foundations, education has been a significant part of the ministry of Sisters of Mercy. The Mercy tradition has always recognised the importance of education as a crucial way for both children and adults to reach their potential. In Australia, the Sisters of Mercy have been in the forefront of educational endeavours, particularly through the Catholic School System, in both primary and secondary, day and boarding schools, in rural and urban areas. Mercy Schools seek to be schools that are inclusive of all, but where the

poor and the marginalised are particularly welcomed. In the spirit of Catherine McAuley, they seek to be places that connect students from a diversity of cultural and socio economic backgrounds as they strive to discover and act on the societal causes of marginalisation. They are schools that promote awareness of our responsibility to the earth.

In addition to involvement in primary and secondary schools across Australia ISMAPNG is involved in a range of educational ministries including pre-school and social skills programs, special education, vocational training, universities, and in parishes and diocesan education programs. ISMAPNG also offers support to pre school education programs in Timor Leste, and is engaged in the support of vocational training and the education of young women and children in Papua New Guinea.



“She connected the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, the educated and skilled to the uninstructed, the influential to those of no consequence, the powerful to the weak.”

Joanna Regan RSM and Isabelle Keiss RSM, *Tender Courage*. p 135





Community Development

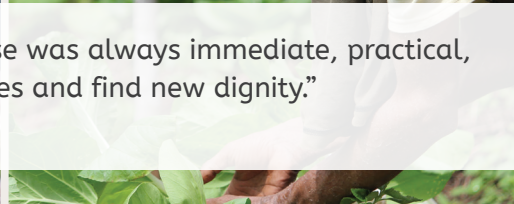
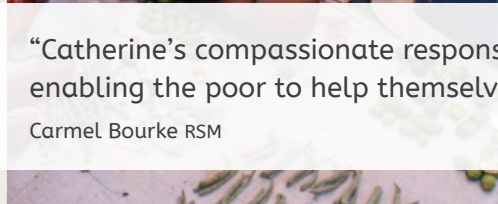
Community development involves long term projects that engage in partnerships with communities. For sustainable change it's important that communities are involved in making informed decisions about their future and play a driving role in determining the support they receive. For that reason the community development projects undertaken are always in response to requests for help – and never impose what we think people may need. This is the only way to foster meaningful and enduring changes in the lives of people and their communities.

The community development programs seek to promote justice, self reliance and to support displaced people and communities who are denied access to basic resources such as education, health care and social welfare. The programs endorse the principles of freedom, mutual respect, environmental sustainability, participation and protection of the rights and responsibilities of all. Community development programs are primarily conducted through Mercy Works in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste; however this ministry area also includes smaller local projects conducted across Australia and overseas.



“Catherine’s compassionate response was always immediate, practical, enabling the poor to help themselves and find new dignity.”

Carmel Bourke RSM





Justice & Advocacy

Grounded in Gospel values and inspired by Catherine McAuley, ISMAPNG seeks to bring about a more just and compassionate world. Sisters and lay colleagues are found in significant or leadership positions as members of a variety of advocacy groups (such as Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans – ACRATH), and serving on both government and non-government agencies working in this area.

“Catherine loved the poor and while she saw the need for individual charity and almsgiving for the poor she also knew that this alone

would not change the unjust structures in the wider society which locked them into a vicious cycle of grinding poverty. She saw the need to address the injustices that excluded the poor from accessing the services which would empower them to liberate themselves from this life of poverty. She developed a vision for the poor of Dublin which would empower them to take charge of their own lives.”

Caitlin Conneely RSM

Challenges from our Tradition, Mercy World Reflections, 2013



“We should be shining lamps, giving light to all around us.”

Catherine McAuley, *Retreat Instructions*. p 155



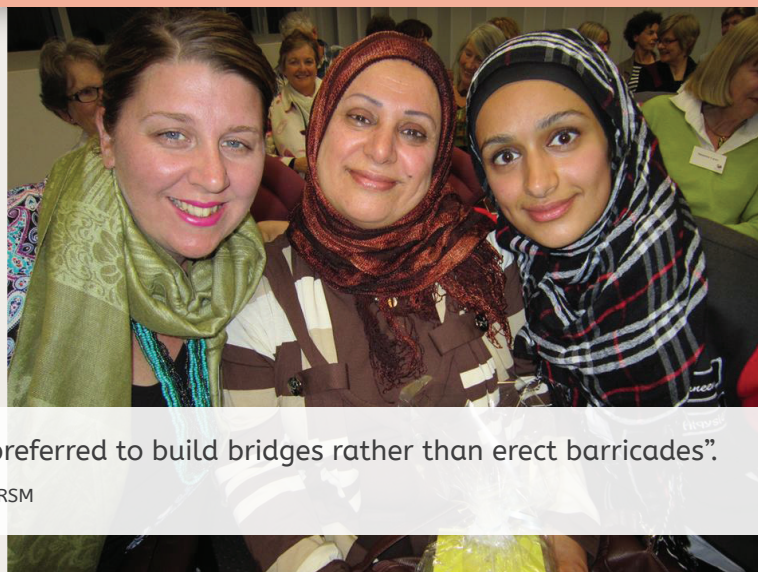
Refugees & Asylum Seekers

ISMAPNG is disturbed by the massive numbers of people in our world who are refugees or displaced and seeking asylum, believing that all people have a right to survive and thrive.

The Sisters of Mercy have a long tradition of working with asylum seekers and refugees. Individual Sisters of Mercy provide pastoral and practical support to asylum seekers in Australian detention centres and those living in the community. Many ministries of ISMAPNG also provide support to refugees and asylum seekers

though a variety of means including providing health care, social services and educational support.

ISMAPNG remains committed to supporting asylum seekers and refugees and advocating for policies which are compassionate and just. Sisters and lay colleagues are found in significant positions of advocacy as members of both government and non-government organisations working in this area.



“Catherine preferred to build bridges rather than erect barricades”.

Angela Bolster RSM



Eco Spirituality

Inspired by Gospel values and in the tradition of Catherine McAuley, ISMAPNG is committed to consciously raising awareness and to working with others, to restore our relationship with Earth and to redress injustice affecting those most impoverished in Earth's community.

ISMAPNG engages in the area of Eco Spirituality through Rahamim, an ecological learning community based in Bathurst NSW, its participation on the MIA international committee working with the committees of the United Nations, and in the personal

lifestyle changes that Sisters and their colleagues have adopted to live more sustainably to name a few.

ISMAPNG is aware that those whose lives and well being are most threatened by social and ecological injustices may be the least able to resist oppression, and so are continually challenged and moved to develop creative ways to respond and collaborate more effectively to eliminate all types of oppression and restore all life-giving interdependent relationships.



“We know that, as members of the Earth community we are integrally connected with each other and with the whole of creation.”

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, Constitutions, 2.02





Prayer & Presence

A significant ministry of ISMAPNG is that of prayer and presence. It is in the very act of praying for our world each and every day that Sisters and their colleagues, in their hearts and minds carry the requests, concerns and needs of the world.

Together with prayer is the ministry of presence where we stand alongside those in need, volunteer in parishes, charity shops, asylum seeker organisations, offer pastoral care and visit those in poverty and those dying. Being present with those who are in need or suffering is foundational to Mercy.



“There are things the poor prize more highly than gold, tho’ they cost the donor nothing; among these are the kind word, the gentle, compassionate look, and the patient hearing of their sorrows.”

Catherine McAuley, *Familiar Instructions*. p 138

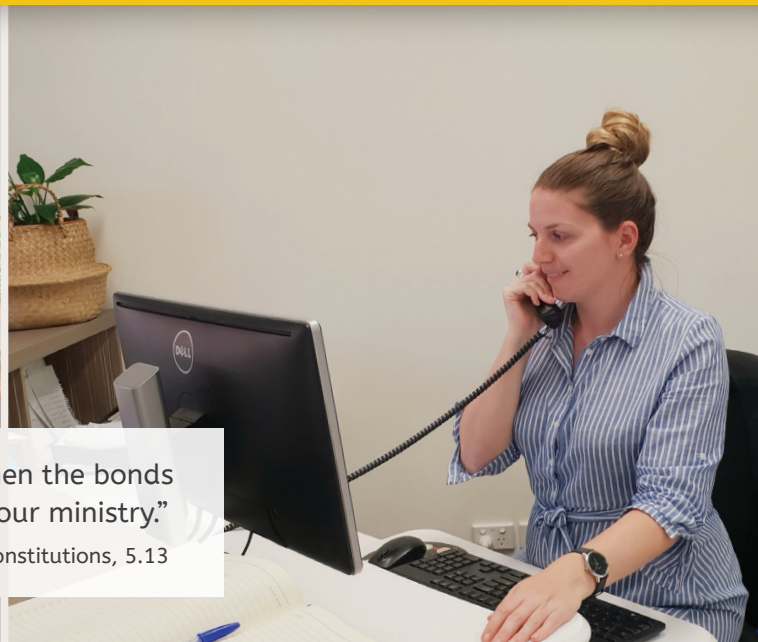




Ministry Support Services

ISMAPNG's Mission Integration (MIU) and Professional Services Units support our Mercy mission in a range of ways. The MIU team focuses on animating, developing and enhancing our response to the call to be agents of God's Mercy in all we do. The Professional Services team provides support for our mission of mercy by managing our resources and ensuring our structures are effective in sustaining our mission.

All within ISMAPNG are committed to creating a culture of safety and respect for all with whom we engage in our ministries. We prioritize the safety and the best interests of all children and vulnerable adults with whom we have contact.



“The challenge is to devise structures that strengthen the bonds which link us together, yet free and support us for our ministry.”

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, Constitutions, 5.13




Communications & Multimedia

Storytelling is an essential part of both Catholic and Mercy Tradition. The annals of the early foundations, and the many letters written by Catherine McAuley provide insight to the significance of communication in building community, of sharing stories, and in connecting with those outside the community to both educate and create support for the work of Mercy.

The ministry of Communications is significant in telling our contemporary stories, in providing information about the work of

ministry within ISMAPNG and to share this work with the local, national and international communities of which we are part. Communications is also an essential tool to providing education, raising awareness and creating dialogue around issues such as injustice and poverty, and in giving voice to those most vulnerable. Today, communications are undertaken in a wide range of print and electronic media, websites, e-news bulletins and social media presence which provide a variety of platforms for engagement in spreading the message and work of Mercy.



“For we learn who we are, indeed we continue to create who we are by the stories we tell.”

Carol Wheeler RSM, Catherine: A Reflection on Values from the Mercy Tradition.

Ministries of ISMAPNG

The ministry areas outlined in this booklet reflect the diverse ways that the mission of Mercy is embodied by ISMAPNG. The work of Mercy is carried out every day by many individual Sisters of Mercy working in their local parishes and communities, in Catholic and secular organizations, in the context of Mercy communities in Australia, Papua New Guinea and in other countries. The work of ISMAPNG is also conducted by thousands of lay staff and volunteers who are engaged in its many ministries.

ISMAPNG is currently reviewing the governance structure for the ministries for which it has sole governance responsibility, in order to ensure their future sustainability. These ministries are:

Mercy Education Ltd.

Mercy Education oversees the operation of 12 Mercy schools within the Institute:

- Mercedes College, Perth, WA
- Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy, VIC
- Sacred Heart College, Geelong, VIC
- Catherine McAuley College, Bendigo, VIC
- St Aloysius College, Adelaide, SA

- St Aloysius College, North Melbourne, VIC
 - Sacred Heart College, Kyneton, VIC
 - Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale, VIC
 - St Joseph's College, Mildura, VIC
 - Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg, VIC
 - St Brigid's College, Lesmurdie, WA
 - Santa Maria College, Attadale, WA
- <http://www.mercy.edu.au/>

McAuley Community Services for Women Ltd

McAuley Community Services for Women supports women and their children who want to be safe from family violence by providing 24/7 crisis support and temporary accommodation. McAuley works alongside them to plan the steps they need to take to move towards a new life free from violence, providing accommodation and support for women who are homeless, a specialist employment program, preventative education programs, social and recreational support, and children's services.

<http://www.mcauleycsw.org.au/home>

Mercy Services Ltd

Mercy Services provides community,

residential and in-home care to older people, people with a disability, people affected by drug and alcohol abuse, the socially disadvantaged and families.

<http://mercyservices.org.au/>

Mercy Health Australia Ltd

Mercy Health provides health, aged care and community services to people at every stage of life. It offers a diverse range of services, including acute and subacute hospital care, aged care, mental health programs, maternity and specialist women's health care, early parenting support, palliative care, and home and community care. <http://www.mercyhealth.com.au>

Fraynetwork Ltd

Fraynetwork seeks to take the important messages of life and find the most effective means to communicate them through the creation of dynamic and engaging resources. Fraynetwork offers production strategy, design, digital, print and video services, assisting clients to tell their stories in clear, informative and engaging ways which can connect them with their communities

<http://www.fraynetwork.com.au/>

McAuley Ministries Ltd

McAuley Ministries exercises governance and oversight for both formal non-incorporated ministries of ISMAPNG as well as for the ministries of Sisters providing a range of services. The ministry areas include health, education, counselling, arts, theology, retreats and spirituality, ecology, hospitality, pastoral care, supervision, social support, rural ministry, mediation, justice and advocacy.

<http://institute.mercy.org.au/>

Mercy Connect Ltd

Mercy Connect offers a range of services to support adults, children and older people with a disability to live independently and be actively involved in their community. Programs support people with disability to build skills and capability to ensure they can participate in leading a meaningful life.

<http://mercyconnect.org.au/>

Catherine McAuley Services Ltd

Catherine McAuley Services provides a corporate entity for ISMAPNG to operate its ministries in Papua New Guinea.

ISMAPNG shares governance

responsibility for the following ministries:

Mercy Works Ltd

Mercy Works supports the local and overseas relief and development activities that are part of the vision and mission of Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea. Mercy Works is a collaborative ministry of ISMAPNG and the Sisters of Mercy Brisbane, North Sydney and Parramatta.

<http://mercyworks.org.au/>

St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East Ltd

St Francis Xavier is a co-educational primary school sponsored by ISMAPNG and the Diocese of Ballarat.

<http://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/>

Damascus College Ltd

Damascus College is a co-educational secondary college co-governed by ISMAPNG and the Association of Canonical Administrators of the parishes of the Ballarat area.

<http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/>

MacKillop Family Services Ltd

MacKillop Family Services provides services for children, young people and families. Programs include foster care and residential care, disability services, refugee services, youth support, education and training, family support and heritage and information services. The ministry is co-sponsored by ISMAPNG, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers.

<http://www.mackillop.org.au/>

Emmanuel College Warrnambool Inc.

Emmanuel College is a co-educational multi-campus secondary college sponsored by ISMAPNG and St Joseph's Parish, Warrnambool. From 2021 it will be governed by Mercy Education Ltd.

<http://www.emmanuel.vic.edu.au/>

It is through the work of the Sisters of Mercy and many ministry colleagues, volunteers, staff and Associates that ISMAPNG is able to make an impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people each day.

<https://institute.mercy.org.au/>



missionintegration@ismapng.org.au