

# MARY'S NEWS TODAY

MARY MACKILLOP  
*today*

Autumn 2018

*You helped Aiden graduate!*

*You're supporting kids with disability*



# Dear friends and supporters of Mary MacKillop Today

Dear Friends

It was on the 19th March 1866, the Feast of St Joseph that Mary MacKillop wore her simple black dress to Mass, made her commitment, and so began the order of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. In Joseph, we recognise that capacity for courageous decision making and a solid trust in God that enabled him to make life-giving choices. The stories outlined in pages of this newsletter are a testament to the fact that those good works and courageous decisions continue in our world through Mary MacKillop Today. With the personal stories of

Clara from Timor-Leste and Aiden here in Australia demonstrating the truly transformational impact you are having.

As we enter the Lenten period please know that your generosity gives vital support to the communities we work with in Australia and around the world and for that we are truly grateful.

With gratitude,

*K. Robertson*

Kirsty Robertson  
CEO



## New beginnings in Fiji

Your generous support of Mary MacKillop Today has enabled us to develop two new partnerships with locally-based organisations in Fiji. In 2019, one of our new partners, Child Benefit will aim to provide children living in informal settlements around the capital of Suva with a high quality and inclusive early childhood education with a Mobile Kindy Service. We have also partnered with Ola Fou Fiji's Project Talitha, which is developing a Women's Leadership program aiming to empower young women to be agents of change within their community. It will invite women in participating communities to take part in a series of training workshops, focusing on building skills in leadership, mentoring and financial literacy as well as building the confidence of young women to raise their voice in community decisions. The passion and hope of these two organisations, coupled with your continued commitment, will see positive transformations in their communities.

**"I think the girls will look back and identify this project as the point their lives changed." – Sereki Korocowiri, Ola Fou Fiji Regional Director**

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ACFID  
MEMBER

Mary MacKillop Today is a signatory of the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct reflecting Mary MacKillop Today's Compliance with industry Standards of good practice, transparency and accountability.

*Inspired by Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop Today empowers communities in Australia and overseas to realise their dignity through education, health, financial inclusion and livelihoods. Mary MacKillop Today's approach is shaped by the principles of our organisation. These principles are Human Dignity, Common Good, Participation and Subsidiarity and Options for the Poor.*

*Mary MacKillop Today acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land, past and present, on which all our offices are located.*



*Clara with her students in Timor-Leste.*

**“Before I attended Health Literacy Training I had a little bit of knowledge about how to wash and basic malaria protection... when my name was on the list to attend training with Mary MacKillop Today I was so excited... it really helped me and enforced my skills to share with my students in the classroom.”**

## Clara's Story

Clara is a dedicated teacher in Fatuberliu, Timor-Leste. Married and with a young son her goal is to teach and guide her students as if they were her own child. Clara recently completed Mary MacKillop Today's Health Literacy training which has been developed to respond to the significant challenge of some of the poorest outcomes for health in Asia for Timor-Leste. The level of knowledge on preventative health among the general population is extremely low, leading to the high prevalence of many illness that could be prevented through a very basic knowledge of good health and hygiene. With your kind help, Mary MacKillop Today will continue to train teachers, like Clara, to convey vital health information in a fun and interactive environment to educate primary school children. Teachers who attend our 5 day training workshop receive upon completion a health education resource kit to take to their school. As an energetic and creative teacher, Clara encourages her students to use these resources to decorate their classroom with basic health knowledge through photos and drawings, as well as singing songs. She also encourages her students to promote hygiene and basic health literacy to their parents, passing on important skills that all the family will benefit from, leading to bright and healthy futures. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our recent crowdfunding campaign for more health education resource kits - it's not too late, you can still help out by using our donation form!



# You helped Aiden graduate!

In 2016 Aiden Pearson received a Mary MacKillop Today Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Scholarship, allowing him to concentrate on his studies and goals without financial worry. Last year Aiden completed his Bachelor in Agribusiness and a Bachelor of Applied Science majoring in Equine Management. His hard work and determination have cumulated in employment in the graduate program at the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, beginning in February this year. Without your commitment to our scholarships, Aiden wouldn't have been able to go to University over the last three years.

**"... this opportunity has not just allowed me to finish university, its enabled me to dream bigger, grasp opportunities I never knew existed, meet amazing people who are now my mentors in industry and others who are friends for life. So I can't thank you all enough at how much this has help my family out."**



**Aiden -  
a First Nations  
Scholar**

## Our community connections

Mary MacKillop Today partners with organisations who support Australia's most vulnerable and marginalised people to improve their lives through education in all its forms. Our Community Grants Program has invested in over 600 life-changing projects across the country, including Headspace's

Individual Placement Support (IPS) in Broome, Western Australia. Headspace began working with Michael\* who was battling homelessness, financial, and personal issues, by supporting him with referrals to doctors, counsellors and vocational specialists. After a bit of time and an amazing show of resilience, Michael, with the help of Headspace, approached a local outback station, who offered Michael a traineeship as a stockman. Your meaningful support contributes to the transformation of lives, like Michael's, here in Australia, and like Clara's, in Timor-Leste. If you're one of our supporters in Perth, WA, or even visiting Perth, we'd love to meet you at our annual 'Breakfast In The Garden'. This event is held at the Mary MacKillop Centre, 16 York Street, South Perth (St Joseph's Convent), on Saturday, March 9th. For details please reach out to Emily Hickman on (02) 8912 2777.



**You helped Michael  
discover his dream  
job**

# Thank you for the gift of books

You might remember at the beginning of January 2018 Mary MacKillop Today's first successful crowdfunding campaign raised over \$18,000. The goal was to produce and develop empowering stories of children with disability in Papua New Guinea with our partner, Buk bilong Pikinini. The *"I Am Noah. This Is My Story"* campaign was launched on Universal Children's Day in November 2018, and thanks to all of your kind donations, we reached our goal! The story recounts how Noah lost his hearing as a child but was able to get an education with the strong support of his Bubu (grandfather) and friends at school. The focus of Noah's story is on his abilities and what he enjoys doing. 10,000 copies of Noah's story will be donated to Elementary and Primary schools around PNG with the aim to get discussions around inclusiveness started with a positive story. With more than 85% of PNG's population living in remote or rural communities, for most children, education during the vital early years of life is inaccessible. For children with disability, these opportunities are even rarer. Barriers such as accessibility, costs and discriminatory attitudes means that children with disability are often excluded from education. *'I am Noah. This is my Story'* can make a difference by raising awareness of the rights, gifts and dreams of children with disability and help change attitudes about the importance of providing quality and inclusive education for all children.



**"Buk bilong Pikinini is grateful for the support and partnership we have received from Mary MacKillop Today to publish Noah's Story to create awareness about the importance of education for children with disability... it is very important for differently abled children (and adults) to have equal rights and the same educational opportunities as everyone else."**  
**- Anne-Sophie Hermann, Buk bilong Pikinini Founder & Chair**

## Help us by collecting stamps

Want a simple and easy way to help Mary MacKillop Today? All you need to do is collect your used stamps and pop them in an envelope and send them to 'Mary MacKillop Today - Reply Paid 88663, North Sydney 2059. No stamp required! You can also ask your office, school, community groups and friends to do the same. It's such an easy way to support our vital work. If you'd like more information, please feel free to call, email or write to us.



# Your future leaders in action!

On December 8th, Mount Saint Joseph High School Milperra, celebrated their annual Peru Day. On this day the Year 10 school students raise money for Mary MacKillop Today through all sorts of stalls. The students had been preparing for months, and the stalls included a haunted house, lots of delicious food and even a dunking pool! We are grateful for all their hard work and effort, raising an amazing \$16,000! This incredible donation will go towards our crucial programs in Peru including the Women's Livelihoods Project, which supports women to learn how to sew or knit beautiful garments, and then market and sell these garments on local markets and internationally. This enables the women to make an income to support themselves and their families. The majority of the women use their income to educate their children, which breaks the cycle of poverty and has an enormous impact over generations. You too can support our Peruvian artisans by buying their beautifully handcrafted fair trade products from our social enterprise, ethica, by going to: [www.ethica.org.au](http://www.ethica.org.au)



Women in Peru  
learning  
life-changing skills

*Photos by Mary MacKillop Today  
Staff, where required, names have  
been changed for privacy.*

MARY MACKILLOP  
*today*

## Staying Connected

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# THANK YOU...

## for your generous support of Mary MacKillop Today.

If you'd like to join us by becoming a Parish Ambassador, running an ethica stall or collecting stamps, call or email us today!

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