Dear Parents and Friends of St Clare’s

We don’t have to tell our hearts to beat, our lungs to breathe, or our stomachs to digest our food. Emotionally we cope with losses and disappointments, sickness and aging, injuries and sadness, and we move forward with our lives, even when things are tough. God has made us resilient, resourceful, and creative in finding ways to live and cope with difficulties.

Joan Guntzelman

Two members of the Catholic Education Commission will visit St Clare’s on Wednesday, 19 August. Michael Egan, Principal, LaSalle Catholic College, Bankstown and Moira Najdecki, Archdiocesan Director of Catholic Education accompanied by Gerard Mowbray, Assistant Director, Catholic Schools Office, Maitland-Newcastle will tour the school, talk to students and staff and inspect the school grounds. The Catholic Education Commission is the peak body for all matters regarding Catholic Education in the state and it is an honour to host their visit to our school.

Recently a group of St Clare’s students and staff visited Sydney on a cultural and academic tour. The 13 Year 9 to 12 students toured Australian Catholic University and Sydney University, met with indigenous students who have successfully negotiated the transition to university life and study, the students also gained insights into possible career paths open to them. Students returned to the school with a renewed sense of their talents and the opportunities open to them.

Thanks to the Australian Catholic University and to staff members Michelle Case and Bernie Holland.
The Unity and Diversity Mass will be held Tuesday, 11 August, at 7 pm at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, Forster. Holy Name Primary and St Clare’s have been working together to make the Mass a memorable community event. I hope you will be able to attend and support the various school communities celebrate the diversity that God provides.

Our next Parents and Friends meeting will be held at 6 pm on Wednesday, 26 August at St Joseph’s, Wingham. I hope you can join us and add your voice and ideas to the feedback that helps the school meet your sons and daughter’s needs.

God Bless

Principal

PRAYERS: Please pray for those who are currently experiencing health difficulties and continue to pray for community members experiencing challenges, pain, sickness and grief in their lives at this time.

CHAPLAINCY/PASTORAL CARE: A reminder to all that the school has a Chaplain. Please feel free to contact our Chaplain, Deacon Vince Ryan, through the school office if he can be of assistance to you or any member of our whole school community.

PRAYER POINT

SUNDAY, 9 AUGUST - 19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

“I am the living bread that comes down from heaven…”

What does this mean? What is ‘living’ bread? What is ‘dead’ bread? Is living ‘bread’ the kind of ‘bread’ that changes as my needs change? And this means that there is someone, separate from me, who knows me well enough to know what I need?

That’s worth thinking about….God is intimately aware of all that I need.

Have a good week

Denise Ryan, Ministry Coordinator
Mary MacKillop’s unselfishness and hospitality ... 

“During my novitiate, I was nursing a sick Sister in the room which was adjoining Mother’s room. Before retiring for the night Mother always visited the invalid, though Mother herself was not at all well that year.

When a sick Sister was brought in from the country Mother insisted on the Sister taking her bed for some weeks—she, herself, slept on the floor in a corner of the room partitioned off by a draught screen ... and it was while occupying this little corner that Mother wrote some of her meditations by candlelight. When Mother told us she would give us our retreat before we received the habit I was not pleased for I thought only a priest could conduct a Retreat. Mother got to know this and afterwards often teased me about it. I look back now and think it was one of the best Retreats I have made ... In reading the lives of the Saints I often think how like them our dear Mother Foundress was ...

During Mother Mary’s long stay in New Zealand, she and my dear Mother became great friends ... When at Grey Lynn Convent, Mother often took me with her as a companion. I was very much edified by her caring and affable manner to anyone in trouble – no matter what the trouble was Mother Mary would find a way to help. On our way to visit a poor sick lady, on one occasion Mother, wishing to take her something, felt in her pocket but found only one penny—so she bought one penny’s worth of lollies for the old lady.

Years after when Mother was taken ill at Rotorua we brought her to Newmarket Convent. I was her night nurse. We tried to keep all worry from her but Mother was very alert. Late one night the door bell rang – Mother asked us ‘Who was there? We told her it was a woman from the country – a perfect stranger to us. Mother asked us to make up a bed in the reception room and accommodate her for the night.”

Do what you can with the means at your disposal and leave all the rest to God

MMK—1888

For pondering and prayer ...

* Sleeping on the floor for weeks ...! How willing am I willing to go beyond my comfort zone when another person’s need is greater than mine?

* ‘No matter what the trouble was Mother Mary would find a way to help’ ... How did I last respond to someone ‘in trouble’? Turn a blind eye? ...OR ... Did I ‘do what I [could] with the means at my disposal and leave all the rest to God’?
18th Annual
Special Needs Mass
Celebrating unity and diversity

2015 theme ‘Sing to the Rainbow’

Holy Name Primary School, together with Catholic schools of the Manning region and Special Needs Working Party of the Federation of P & F Associations, warmly welcome all to join with teachers, principals, school staff and parishioners to celebrate our Annual Special Needs Mass!

August 11

Tuesday 11 August, 7pm
Holy Name Catholic Church
Lake Street Forster

No RSVP required, however for further details, please contact: Cath Garrett-Jones, Parent Liaison and Resource Officer P 4979 1303 E cath.garrett-jones@mn.catholic.edu.au
Mass Times

Our Lady of the Rosary, Taree
75 Albert St, Taree
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
Sunday Mass: 9:30 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Wingham
8 Farquhar Street, Wingham
Sunday: 8:30am

St Bernadette’s, Krambach
Bucketts Way, Krambach
Saturday: 6:30 pm (On the weekend of a
5th Sunday, a Liturgy of the Word with
Communion is held at Nabiac Church

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Harrington
Pilot St, Harrington
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm (1st, 3rd and 5th Saturdays in each month)
Saturday Liturgy of the Word
and Communion: 6:00 pm (2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month)

St Therese’s, Lansdowne
Cundle Rd, Lansdowne
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm (2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month)

Our Lady of Fatima, Old Bar
20 Hall St, Old Bar
Sunday Mass: 7:30 am

St Patrick’s, Cundletown
River St, Cundletown
Sunday Mass: 6:00 pm

Forster-Tuncurry Catholic Parish
Holy Name of Jesus Parish Church, Forster
33 Lake Street, Forster
Sunday Mass: 9:00 am

St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Tuncurry
15 Peel Street, Tuncurry
Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm
Sunday Mass: 7:00 am

FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL:

Year 12 students conclude their Trial HSC Examinations on Monday, 10 August with normal classes resuming on Tuesday, 11 August.

Students and parents/carers are reminded that students are NOT yet meant to be HSC ready: these examinations serve to indicate to both teachers and students where improvements are required in order to access the higher band marks. There are still six weeks of teaching left before students leave school and then a further three weeks of StuVac.

Students have received Graduation packages so that a maximum of four tickets (one for the student, two for parents/carers and one for another guest) can be ordered and table groups arranged. The school recognises that there can be some special circumstances regarding a request for extra tickets – contact Mrs Healey or Mr Evans.

On Tuesday, 18 August, Year 12 will have a BIG DAY IN where staff members will work with students regarding functions and expectations through to the end of the year and guidance for 2016. There will be more information about this day in next week’s edition of the Weekly Newsletter.
Year 11 students have commenced the process to determine 2016 School Leaders. There were 21 applicants, a very pleasing number, whose résumés are currently being screened by staff members prior to 18 students being invited to present Election Speeches to the entire school community at a Special Events Assembly commencing at 10 am on Tuesday, 18 August. A draft of the speech is to be submitted for scrutiny by Monday, 17 August, at 3 pm. If a student has any questions regarding this process, they are to contact the SRC Coordinators (Mrs Eady or Miss Pearse).

The Year 11 Senior Retreat will be held at the Uniting Church Conference Centre at Elanora Heights in northern Sydney. It is a MANDATORY EVENT which will be held from Wednesday, 21 October until Friday, 23 October. Detailed information regarding the organisation and importance of this event has been sent home with students. The cost is $250 per student. Families are asked to either:

- Pay $250 by Friday, 14 August 2015, OR
- Pay a $100 deposit by Friday, 14 August, 2015, with the $150 balance to be paid by the last day of Term 3, Friday, 18 September 2015.

If there are any concerns with your ability to meet this cost, please contact Principal, Peter Nicholls, at school (6552 3300).

Ian Evans, Year 12 Student Coordinator and Bronwen Davidson, Year 11 Student Coordinator

CAREERS CORNER: Year 12 students now have their UAC books and are busy researching their options. Students are encouraged to have a Plan A, Plan B and Plan C in order to cover all options. The plans include University, TAFE and employment. Students can consider such things as TAFE university pathway.

The UAC website for applications opened on 5 August. Students are encouraged to discuss their options with the Careers Adviser before they apply to ensure that problems do not arise. I am available to assist parents and students to complete applications. I am available before and after school for appointments. Applications close 30 September.

At a recent meeting the latest statistics show 30% of students will enter university and then there is a further drop out of students due to their inability to cope with the level of work required for various courses. Students are encouraged to explore the many other options available. A TAFE - University pathway, Apprenticeship and Traineeship and Cadetship pathway and employment pathway should be considered.

Aiden Young is now smiling because he has completed his applications
Year 10 Work Experience last week was very successful and very positive comments were expressed by employers in relation to our students. Carol Healey, Careers Adviser

William Avery & Eliza Williamson

HOSPITALITY HAPPENINGS: Students have been involved in assisting the Winning Post function centre with the Taree Great Lakes Business Awards function last Friday night. The students were excellent and showed the local community the depth of their skills and the positive work ethic that students displayed. These students also gained competencies for their Hospitality course. Carol Healey, TAS Coordinator
ABOUT THE NYSF: The NYSF aims to nurture and encourage young Australians to be the next generation of leading scientists and engineers supporting a sustainable future for our nation. It offers a growing suite of programs across Australia to develop the exposure of Year 12 science students to study, research and future employment opportunities.

**Inspiring Futures**
The NYSF helps students moving into Year 12, who wish to follow careers in science, engineering and technology by introducing them to research and researchers, by encouraging the achievement of excellence in all their undertakings, and by helping to develop their communication and interpersonal skills. It also fosters discussion of, and interest in, major national and global issues and emphasises the importance of maintaining continuing active interests in sport, arts and music.

The NYSF’s mission is to provide community minded and science focused young Australians an opportunity for network development and insight into skills, careers and a lifetime of achievement in science, engineering and technology.

The flagship event of the NYSF is the January Forum. Until recently this event had been held exclusively in Canberra and hosted by The Australian National University. In 2010 the NYSF introduced a third session, in Perth, co-hosted by the Curtin University and The University of Western Australia.

One of the most important aspects coming from the NYSF is a network of friends, colleagues and support groups throughout Australia, which will be of value to participants for the whole of their lives.

Our local Rotary clubs are responsible for the selection procedures. They conducted formal interviews and nominated our students for District Selections, which can be regarded as Round 2 in the Selection process. It is at these Selections that final decisions are made about who will attend the NYSF from your District.

St Clare’s High School, Taree, has had a remarkable history in this program, with students achieving selection through to the Forum and having marvellous experiences in the field of Science, meeting notable scientists and forming lifelong partnerships with other students and organisations.
This year I am most pleased to announce that three of our St Clare’s High School, Taree, candidates were successful in being selected to attend the flagship event of the NYSF in the January Forum. Congratulations Declan Moylan, Damien Owen, and Thomas Tsang on this splendid achievement. The selection process is very rigorous and demands excellence in many areas. With this in mind I want to officially congratulate these students, wish them the best for their experience in this program, and look forward to hearing about their involvement with this program in 2016.

Ms Sheena O’Doherty, Studies Coordinator (Science)

MATHEMATICS FOR THE ‘GIFTED AND TALENTED’:

“Two’s company, three is a crowd, what is four and five?”

“Once spoken, broken. I’m not a secret and I’m not a promise. What am I?”

These riddles had both Year 7 and Year 8 math nerds sprinting to the front of the hall for a sugar hit! (Answers at the end of the newsletter.)

On Friday, 24 July, the students in the top Mathematics classes from Years 7 and 8 spent the day exercising their brains as part of a Gifted and Talented program. During the day they worked in teams to solve many challenging problems with the winners of each section receiving Certificates and very large blocks of chocolate. Students found this day both challenging and rewarding.
Over a three week period during the latter part of Term 2, five of our gifted mathematicians participated in the Australian Mathematics Challenge. They worked both as a team and individually to solve a series of six mathematical problems. They displayed great teamwork and excellent problem solving skills to find solutions to all the problems that were set. Congratulations to Sidhant Joon (Year 10) who was awarded a High Distinction, Luke Strong (Year 9) a Distinction, Harold Last (Year 9) a Credit and Saksham Lama and Clare Sephton (Year 9) who both received a participation award. Well done, to all five students, and thank you for your willingness to participate in this challenge. It is wonderful to see such gifted young people utilising their talent.
On Wednesday, 12 August, our gifted and talented students from the top mathematics classes from Years 7-10 will be participating in the ICAS Mathematics Competition. We wish them all the best as they continue to extend their problem solving skills. **Mrs J Rowsell, Mathematics Coordinator**

ANSWERS TO MATHS QUESTIONS: (9) (promise)

YEAR 11 MUSIC1 PERFORMANCE EVENING: On Wednesday, 29 July, the Year 11 Music1 students presented their assessment performance items to teachers, family and friends in the Drama Room. Each student was required to play two contrasting pieces. The evening was enjoyed by a wonderful audience. The musical items represented a large diversity of music, ranging from Bach to Jessie J, Elton John and the musical, *Wicked*.

The students are to be commended on the presentation of their performances and the support they displayed for each other.

Special thanks to Mr McDougall and Mrs McKendry who generously gave of their time to assess the students.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY MASS: Next Tuesday, 11 August, students from St Clare’s will lead the music at the Annual Diocesan Special Needs Mass. The event will be held at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Forster. All are welcome to attend. Details are advertised in the newsletter.

CELLO LESSONS:

“Education in Music is most sovereign because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the innermost soul and take strongest hold upon them, bringing with them and imparting grace if one is rightly trained” ... Plato  c. 360BC

This year St Clare’s is offering Cello lessons with Cheryl Meyers, a wonderful experienced teacher and cellist. There is a vacancy on a Friday morning for an interested student who would like to learn the cello. Please see Mrs Brown for further information.

**Viva la Musica**

Mrs Brown
On the 24th June, 10 students and three teachers departed for 13 days of sun and adventure in Australia’s Top End. The trip up was an uneventful ride, thanks to the lovely folk at Qantas. We arrived on time and the rush began to get everything organised for the adventure ahead….picking up cars, a trailer, groceries, equipment from the Dukes mob at Berrimah. With all the chores done for the day, we settled in for a BBQ on the cliffs at Dripstone and to watch our first sunset over the beautiful Arafura Sea.

The next day saw us have a lazy start, visiting the Water Park at Leanyer, going to Crocodylus Park for the croc feeding and finally the dinner and sights at the famous Mindil Beach Sunset Markets….this was shaping up to be a marvellous adventure.

Friday morning was the start of 10 days in Kakadu National Park, where we would look at ancient rock art, try bush tucker during Mr Hollands frequent impromptu roadside stops and venture into some of the most amazing and untouched places that the park has to offer. We went on a crocodile watching cruise on Corroboree Billabong and saw unbelievable sights! Just ask those who were there. Our first night was spent at Ubirr Rock where we had a “Lion King” moment watching the sun set over the Arnhem Land Plains.
The next day we moved onto the Nourlangie region where we completed a three day hike into Gubara Pools and surrounding Gorge. This site has one of the greatest concentrations of aboriginal art in the world and much of it has not been photographed. Every crevice revealed new discoveries of art and we took time to interpret the stories being told.

Whilst much of Kakadu is open to the public, some areas require permits to visit. Mr Holland sought permits and over the 10 days in the Park, we were able to find many places only seen by small groups of people each year.

The Photos really don’t do it justice and the best thing is that it’s all yours….not another person to be seen.

After Gubara, we visited Jim Jim Falls. The scale of the place is immense! In the wet season more than an Olympic pool of water tumbles into the falls each second.

We were to spend the night at Bernie’s secret place but others were booked in so we camped in the hidden oasis of Ferny Gully.
We explored the next day finding Moline falls and finished with sunset at Gunlom Falls where we slept the night preparing for our next three day trek into the gorge of Dinner Creek.

This was a much more arduous trek. Hotter, dryer, more dangerous with crocs, pigs and water buffalo to contend with. The greater the challenge the greater the adventure. In the gorge we discovered many waterfalls and swimming holes with crystal clear water and big fresh water fish. These were safe for swimming as they are above the level crocs can reach.
At the end of our awesome adventure, we stopped at Douglas Hot Springs, the ‘Secret Hot Springs’ and Adelaide River Inn for Barra and chips with Charlie the buffalo (from croc Dundee). On arriving back in Darwin, we headed to the wharf for dinner and to soak up our last moments in the Top End.

Thanks to all the great students who were part of Top End 2015. I really enjoyed spending time with you guys and I know that ‘the boys’ will talk about it for years to come. I look forward to joining you all on your next chapter in the Duke of Ed journey.

Duke of Edinburgh Top End Crew 2015
150 DONATIONS: Brooke from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS) presenting Rhonda Stitt (St Clare’s Lab Assistant) with her Milestone Award for ‘150 Donations’. Congratulations Rhonda!

SPINE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA: The Spine Society of Australia has written to the school reminding us regarding the importance of taking part in the Self-Detection Program for screening for Scoliosis (spinal curvature).

A brochure can be assessed directly via a link on the Scoliosis Australia home page at www.scoliosis-australia.org.

Scoliosis (spinal curvature) is an important health problem for adolescent girls and 25 per thousand are at risk of developing a significant curve. Three girls per thousand require active treatment (spinal brace or surgery). Because in the early stages the condition is most often asymptomatic, screening in the age range 11-13 years is a sound preventative health measure.

The website contains comprehensive credible information about the symptoms and treatment of scoliosis. Using the forum on our website, girls and their parents can obtain general advice from certified specialists who manage patients with spinal curvature.

MATHS WORKSHOP - Mathematics Workshop provides the opportunity for every student to obtain assistance and support in improving their understanding of mathematics. Four mathematics teachers are available each week to explain the concepts you are finding difficult or give assistance to enable you to complete your homework, assignments or any work that you may have missed due to absence from class.

WHEN IS IT ON? Wednesday lunchtime - every week.

Bring your lunch!

WHERE? Room 10

We hope to see you there!

Mrs Julie Rowsell- Mathematics Coordinator
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<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>TUESDAY</td>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>Brigitte Anderson</td>
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<td>WEDNESDAY</td>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Karen Larkin</td>
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<td>THURSDAY</td>
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<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>14/8</td>
<td>Jenny Chippett – ½ day</td>
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**VACANCIES STILL EXIST**  
MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED  
IF YOU CAN ASSIST PLEASE CONTACT CHERYL KINGSFORD  
ST CLARE’S CANTEEN: 6591 2104, HOME: 6552 1857 OR  
VIA EMAIL: cheryl.kingsford@mn.catholic.edu.au

**PARENT & STUDENT REMINDERS:**

**LEAVE NOTES & STUDENT MESSAGES:** It would be appreciated if parents/guardians would send in a **written note** if their child needs to leave early for appointments etc. Notes should be handed in at the front office in the **morning before roll call**. If parents/guardians need to notify their child of a change of afternoon arrangements, it is necessary to **phone the school prior to 2:25 pm** (End of Lunch – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday) or **prior to 1:55 pm** (End of Lunch – **Thursday Sport**) as it is often difficult to locate students if their last lesson is a PE Prac or there has been a room change.

Students cannot be collected from the school during school hours by **anyone other than a parent or guardian without written permission**. Thank you.

**LATE NOTES:** Lateness to school is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained to the school the same way as other forms of absence. **Arriving Late for school requires a handwritten note from a parent/carer or a phone call from a parent/carer** or the absence is recorded as an unexplained partial absence. Thank you.

**SCHOOL CLINIC:** Students are reminded that if they are unwell whilst at school they are to advise their teacher who will then send them to the Front Office. If necessary, the office staff will contact a parent while the student waits in the Clinic. **Students are not to contact parents on their mobile phones** as this leaves teachers and office staff unaware of the situation and is also in breach of the school policy – use of mobile phones. Thank you.
COMING EVENTS

Term 3

Week 5  Monday  10/8 ♦ Trial HSC Examinations Conclude
         Tuesday  11/8 ♦ Dio Athletics
         Friday   14/8 ♦ St Clare’s Feast Day

Week 6  Wednesday  19/8 ♦ School Social
         Thursday  20/8 ♦ Vietnam Veterans Day Service
                       ♦ Japanese Exchange Parent Information Evening

Week 6  Wednesday  19/8 ♦ School Social

Week 9  Friday  11/9 ♦ Year 7 Vaccinations – 3rd Dose

Week 10 Thursday  17/9 ♦ Year 12 Assembly and Big Buzz
               Friday   18/9 ♦ Year 12 Graduation Mass
                       ♦ Japanese Exchange students depart (Return 2 October)

Term 4

Week 1  Friday  9/10 ♦ Year 7 2016 Orientation Day

Week 2  Monday  12/10 ♦ HSC Written Examinations Commence

Week 3  Wednesday  21/10 ♦ Senior Retreat – Year 11

Week 5  Friday  6/11 ♦ HSC Written Examinations Conclude

Week 6  Friday  13/11 ♦ Year 12 Graduation

Week 10 Sunday  6/12 ♦ Carols by Candlelight, Our Lady of the Rosary, Taree
        Activities commence 3:30 pm – Carols from 6 pm

Week 11 Wednesday  16/12 ♦ HSC results released
The Spring Fair aims to capture the school spirit and embrace the wider community - all are welcome!

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5
10AM-2PM

St Joseph’s Primary School Taree

SPRING FAIR

SKYDIVING DISPLAY
JAKE DAVEY & CAMEL RIDES
CLASSIC CARS
JUMPING CASTLE
TRACKLESS TRAIN
FOOD & MUSIC
MARTIAL ARTS DEMO
REPTILE DISPLAY
MARKET STALLS

STATIONARY ENGINES
SHOWBAGS
PHOTO BOOTH
CHOCOLATE WHEEL
PLANT STALL
BOOK STALL
FACE PAINTING

LOTS OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE KIDS

St Joseph’s Primary School, 1 St Joseph’s Drive (off Kanangra Drive)
Follow us on facebook.com/joeysspringfair or call 0423 911 913
Our common home: FACING CLIMATE CHANGE TOGETHER

A marvellous gift
"Creation is a gift, it is a present, it is a marvellous gift given to us by God so that we might care for it and use it, always gratefully and always respectfully, for the benefit of everyone." — Pope Francis, 28 October 2014
A great gift brings great responsibility. We are all stewards of creation, and must respect, care for and share all gifts God has given us, including the environment.

A gift at risk
Now, more than ever, we are called to care for creation responsibly. Increasingly, our environment is being endangered by human activity.
The effects of climate change are already being felt around the world. As global temperatures rise, we will experience increasingly severe impacts on a global scale. These may include inundation of low-lying coastal areas, climate-induced migration of millions of people, growing risks to human health, the collapse of vulnerable ecosystems, and reduced crop yields.

"Rapid climate change as the result of human activity is now recognised by the global scientific community as a reality...People around the world are experiencing the impacts of increasing sea temperatures, rising sea levels, and a change in the frequency of extreme climatic events." — Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2005

A shared responsibility
The effects of these disasters are the most debilitating for the children, women and men vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice — often those who have contributed least to global warming. Extreme weather events affect every aspect of their daily lives: their safety, their livelihoods, their environment and their wellbeing.

But there’s still time to mitigate climate change, if we act together. We are one human family, caring for creation. We invite you to join us in walking in solidarity with those communities most at risk.

Together we can learn, share and find solutions to climate change injustice. Together we can create a more just world, caring for our common home.

"The environment must be seen as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations." — Pope Benedict XVI, 1 January 2010

Seeking solutions together
Many communities affected by climate change are responding with resourcefulness and courage. Around the world, vulnerable communities have identified their greatest challenges, and are partnering with local organisations to find sustainable solutions.

Caritas Australia, the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church, is privileged to share the stories of three communities who are working to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. These are stories of resilience, innovation and dignity, from some of the world’s regions most threatened by the destructive effects of climate change:

Rowan, from Australia, describes how the land can be protected by combining traditional practices and business needs

Gusto, from Bangladesh, shows that a community can adapt its farming practices to ensure food security

Marina, from the Solomon Islands, tells how a community can prepare itself for greater safety when natural disasters strike

Caritas Australia is the Catholic agency for international aid and development.
Caring for country, caring for climate
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ABORIGINAL LAND

“The earth is an environment to be safeguarded, a garden to be cultivated.” – Pope Francis, 6 June 2013

Rowan’s question

“How do you build a sustainable industry on Aboriginal land that is economically viable and good for the land?” This question has driven Rowan Foley for many years. Rowan is from the Wondiwoi clan of the Baduji people, Traditional Owners of Fraser Island and Hervey Bay in Queensland.

He is a ranger by trade, and in this role he has cared for Australia’s traditional lands in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory. Rangers run cultural and natural resource projects on the traditional land, which is a world heritage national park. Their work supports the traditional landowners by enhancing their region’s unique biodiversity and cultural values.

Climate change challenges

Today, regions throughout Australia are feeling the effects of climate change. The rangers’ work is needed more urgently than ever.

Climate change is making Australia hotter, with more very hot days and with longer and more frequent heatwaves. Seven of the ten warmest years on record have occurred since 2002. There are more extreme fire risk days each year, and the bushfire season is longer.

Connected to the land

Australia’s First Peoples are deeply connected to their traditional lands. But these lands are located in some of the hottest areas of the country. Rising temperatures have increased the risk of devastating bushfires.

Wildfires are a real threat to the stability of the communities living on country. Fires harm the land, affecting the livelihood, health and wellbeing of the traditional landowners, and the future of their culture.

Looking for an answer

Is there a way to care for the land so that the traditional owners can continue to live there, with a secure future? A new initiative has led Rowan closer to an answer.

In 2010 Rowan became the inaugural General Manager of the Aboriginal Carbon Fund, set up to support the sustainable development of Aboriginal lands. The Carbon Fund has attracted significant support in Australia, partnering with Aboriginal organisations, the business community and Caritas Australia.

Rowan tells the story

“The aim was to create a partnership between business and traditional landowners that would reduce climate change effects across the country.”
Together for a common purpose

Over the last few years, this program has prevented the hot summer fires, and it has also had social benefits.

The Kowanyama project gets people out on country and gives them access to bush tucker and other resources. It gets families and clans together, and helps with maintaining traditional knowledge and a healthy lifestyle.

It provides for better management of country. And it strengthens people's connection with country.

Broad social and cultural outcomes

Traditional landowners are working as rangers, directly addressing climate change through other work in the community.

With the funds from carbon farming in the two coolest months, they can work to achieve broad social and cultural outcomes for the other ten months of the year.

For example, they would undertake turtle tagging programs and participate in cultural programs.

A new sustainable industry

Carbon farming has put money in the bank for many marginalised First Australian communities. About 30 Australian organisations are buying carbon credits through this scheme, including banks, airlines, councils and universities.

Financial recognition has given traditional landowners a sense of pride in their work. People are holding their heads higher knowing that what they're doing is of value. They're generating income and protecting country and culture. They are feeling pretty good, and the community is realising its collective strengths.

These are the embryonic stages of a new sustainable industry on Aboriginal land.

It's a clear signal to the business world. It's a strong case for social return on investment—permanent jobs for traditional owners working in the sustainability industry in remote communities, using traditional knowledge and skills.

Building a bridge

This program has made greater interaction possible between traditional owners and non-Indigenous Australians. It has brought neighbouring Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups together for a common purpose—looking after country.

Carbon can build a bridge between black and white. Our work can help their business, and we can build a relationship. This program could be part of a reconciliation action plan or help organisations meet corporate social responsibility goals.

The question answered

With carbon farming, sustainable economies on rural and remote Aboriginal lands are employing local people, and improving the environment. You can look after country, and it can be economically viable. It's a realisation of a dream.
Farming for the future
A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SUPPLY IN BANGLADESH

"Nurturing and cherishing creation is a command. God gives not only at the beginning of history, but to each of us, it is part of his plan; it means causing the world to grow responsibly, transforming it so that it may be a garden, a habitable place for everyone.”
— Pope Francis, 6 May 2013

Growing knowledge and skills
Gusto Gupal describes himself as a person with “skill and knowledge” about agriculture. He is a leader in his community in south-western Bangladesh, passing on knowledge of sustainable agriculture, and contributing to the social advancement of his fellow villagers.
But this was not always the case. Before 2009, Gusto described himself as “a poor and landless farmer” living with his family in a hut. He and his wife had to ‘sell their labour’ to others, but work was available for only three months each year, during the rice and shrimp cultivation periods. The family did not have enough money to educate all three children, and often there was not enough food to eat.

Once a fertile land
Gusto’s village in east Jelekhal lies on the bank of Bangladesh’s Malancha River. This is one of the most fertile areas in the densely populated region.

Most people who live there are farmers, relying heavily on the land for both food and livelihood. Though the environment in the region is so critical to the community, it is one of the most vulnerable in the world to climate change.
In Bangladesh climate change will continue to cause rising sea levels, extreme river floods, more intense tropical cyclones and very high temperatures. Salinity intrusion is also killing off fertile land. Agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate change: food security, food prices and nutrition are all adversely affected when extreme weather events disrupt people’s lives.

A seed of hope
In 2008, Gusto learnt that Caritas Bangladesh, with support from Caritas Australia, was offering a program to assist farmers in south-west Bangladesh. This program had sprung from local farmers’ recognition that natural disasters were increasingly
eroding their landscape, and they needed to adopt new agricultural practices to
withstand any further damage.

Like other local farmers, Gusto saw the program as a seed of hope. He seized
the opportunity to be trained in sustainable farming practices that would make
increase his independence and offer a more secure future for his family.

In the program, farmers identified the challenges they were facing, and were
supported in finding sustainable solutions. They were trained to implement
workable new systems for fish farming, seed germination, vegetable cultivation,
and kitchen gardening and nursery development.

For two years, Gusto undertook training on adaptive technologies, such as natural
fertilizers and pesticides, drip irrigation and saline-tolerant rice and fish cultivation.
He learnt new techniques that have allowed him to use the same fresh water to
grow rice and farm fish in one field.

Financial support enabled the farmers to put their learning into practice, and in
2009 Gusto received funding. He used it to lease land, and began fish farming using
his newly acquired skills.

A setback to growth

Only a few months later the devastating cyclone “Aila” tore through the coastal
belt of Bangladesh. The storm claimed 210 lives and flattened more than 3000
thatched homes. Gusto lost his dwelling house and kitchen. Tidal surges washed
out his farm, and he lost his assets.

“Our land flooded with sea water, contaminating all our fresh water supplies,”
Gusto said. “We were lucky to escape with our lives. My rice and vegetable gardens
stopped producing, and with no fresh water I had to sell all my livestock.”

With support from Caritas Australia, the community excavated a canal to provide
renewable fresh water supplies. Six hundred homes were built and roads were
repaired, with funding from several organisations.

Cultivating a new future

This second stage of support helped Gusto and other farmers in the community to
consolidate the skills they had gained from the training program, and from working
their own land. As more sustainable practices are being undertaken, the local
environment is being renewed.

Gusto now applies some of the techniques he learnt during training to protect his
crops. “We use raised vegetable beds and cultivate saline-tolerant rice. And we
use the canal for water. I can now cultivate year-round vegetables and fish. It has
 ensured my family’s food security.”

As Gusto has become more confident in his ability to farm sustainably, he has
begun to pass on his knowledge to the farmers in his community.

“I first started compost preparation in 2011. Three years later, about 270
families are preparing and using compost fertilizer, and vermicomposting.
I have established a seed bank, and distributed seed to poor farmers.”

The local government representative of his village, Ms Nurjahan Begum,
said, “The community people are now getting encouragement and motivation
on organic farming, climate resilience agricultural production and climate
adaptive technology from Gusto Gopal.”

Gusto supports people in his community through training and help with understanding farming
technology. He also plays a leadership role on the village’s school and social
festival committees.

Gusto plans to buy more land, and use this to demonstrate best practice to
the community. “Now,” he says, “I am confident enough to raise voice and
able to motivate the community for alternative livelihoods and offer poor
people dignity.”

“A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of
the earth... above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and
respect for every human being.”

— Pope Francis, 20 June 2013
Singing for safety
INCREASING RESILIENCE TO DISASTER IN THE PACIFIC

“Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and deforestation are already showing their devastating effects in the great cataclysms we witness.” — Pope Francis, 28 October 2014

Martina’s story
Martina lives in the Solomon Islands. She is a teacher at Bishop Epalle Catholic School in Ngqesi, West Honiara. She loves to teach and her small classroom rings daily with the sounds of her students’ eager voices, often raised in song.

“My students love to sing,” says Martina.

But, while the classroom is a place of learning and laughter, the world outside can be far less stable. In the Solomon Islands, our changing climate means that sea levels are rising, increasing the impact of storm surges and coastal flooding. Tropical cyclones are projected to become more intense and the weather will become more extreme, with more heavy rainfall days and more very hot days expected.

“Our homes are under threat from landslides and cyclones,” says Martina.

The Solomon Islands also experience tsunamis. In 2013, a powerful earthquake on Guizo Island in the northwest of the Solomon Islands triggered a tsunami that swept away many homes. Several people were reported missing. Every year, the Islanders’ safety is under threat during the six-month cyclone season.

Calming the children’s fears
For the children, these extreme weather events and other natural hazards can be overwhelming. At times, they have felt fearful and insecure on their way to school. Disasters commonly occur in the mornings, when the children may be walking or travelling alone.

To learn more about this program, see a video at www.caritas.org.au/nurseryrhyme
The joy of song
Martina has seen many benefits of the program for her students. The students enjoy learning the songs, and the movements that accompany them. “The songs help children memorise the emergency response,” she said.

The program is based on group singing, and this has added a benefit. Group singing is known as a valuable coping strategy for people enduring challenging times.

Through their learning, Martina’s students have taught many others safe behaviours for managing disasters.

“Really helpful for their family”
The impact of this program is also evident among the children’s peers, families and neighbours.

Martina recalls: “It happened that during a weekend an earthquake shook. On Monday when we came back to school I asked my students what happened on Saturday afternoon and they told me there was an earthquake and they used the nursery rhyme based on the earthquake. One of my students told me that the nursery rhyme that I taught was really helpful for their family.”

Singing its praises
The education program has been recognised internationally for its ability to help communities prepare for natural disasters. In 2014, it received the inaugural Pacific Innovation and Leadership Award for Resilience from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. This award recognises innovative approaches to disaster risk reduction in the Pacific.

While this recognition is a reward in itself, the greatest reward is the community’s increasing sense of resilience. A community vulnerable to the impacts of climate change is finding its own solutions. Martina has observed that, as her community becomes increasingly effective at protecting itself, it is facing its future with growing confidence and strength.

“Now our children and their parents know what to do, they are more confident. Singing has given them hope that when the floods come, everything will be okay.”

With support from the Australian Government, Cartas Australia has expanded the program’s reach to other areas. It was developed in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and is also being carried out in Tonga.

When Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu in March 2015, families faced the onslaught of wind and water with greater confidence. Using the safe practices learnt through the rhymes, they sang their way to safety.

“This program relies on strong partnerships in the community. Everyone is responsible for minimising the risk of disaster in a community, from teachers and children and their parents to the National Disaster Management Office.”

— Mary Malaseika, Solomon Islands program officer, 2015
We must care for our sister the Earth, our mother Earth, so that she does not respond with destruction.”
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Caritas Australia is the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church in Australia. Through effective relationships with the Church, local partners and communities, Caritas Australia helps to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity in over 30 countries. Many of our programs, advocacy and education initiatives overseas and in Australia assist communities facing challenges due to a changing climate. We envisage a world in which children, women and men most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice are architects of their own sustainable development.

Caritas Australia is part of Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of over 160 members worldwide. Caritas Internationalis works with national Caritas organisations around the world, Bishops’ Conferences, local partners and vulnerable communities to speak out on, and respond to, global issues, including climate change.

The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.