



DEC/JAN 2021/22

# MMMTEAM News

AUSTRALIA



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# NATIVITY SCENES



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## The Nativity Scene

We have all either made or seen one of those 'adorable' nativity scenes with a family gathered around a small baby in a pristine straw lined stable, wise men looking on with their gifts, angels peering in from the rafters, the room lit by the brightness of a beaming star, shepherds gathering in the doorway. The truth is probably somewhat different!



The Bible records that Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem late, and the place was packed, hotels (*Inn's*) were full, and accommodation was pretty much impossible to get. Stables were not a pretty place, they didn't smell nice, and would have no heating or creature comforts, they would have been filled with the donkeys from those who had arrived in the town earlier and had secured accommodation at the Inn, as well as domestic livestock of the Bethlehem locals. Out of desperation the innkeeper offered the only 'under cover' space he had left for the heavily pregnant Mary and her husband. This was the real nativity scene, and not the westernised sanitised scene we see on Christmas cards and in church plays.

So where did the concept of displaying the birth scene of Jesus Christ originate? Well.... That's a really good question.... Thanks for asking!!! The research team at the Smithsonian Institute have the answer.

The first nativity scene was created in the year 1223 ! Nativity buffs will also note that the familiar cast of characters relied upon today is not strictly Biblically accurate.

At some point in childhood, many kids don a blue shawl or fake beard and act out the nativity scene in front of doting parents and grandparents. Whether performed by children, set up as little figurines in a home or installed as a life-size tableau in front of a church, these scenes are a staple of the Christmas holidays. But when did this tradition begin?

Blame St. Francis of Assisi, who is credited with staging the first nativity scene in 1223. The only historical account we have of Francis' nativity scene comes from "The Life of St. Francis of Assisi" by St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan monk who was born just five years before Francis' death.

According to Bonaventure's biography, St. Francis got permission from Pope Honorius III to set up a manger with hay and two live animals—an ox and an ass—in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio. He then invited the villagers to come gaze upon the scene while he preached about "The Babe of Bethlehem" (*Francis was supposedly so overcome by emotion that he couldn't say "Jesus"*).

Bonaventure also claims that the hay used by Francis miraculously acquired the power to cure local cattle diseases and pestilences. The nativity scene's popularity took off from there. Within a couple of centuries, nativity scenes had spread throughout Europe. We don't know if people actually played Mary and Joseph during Francis' time, or whether they just imagined those figures' presence. We do know that later scenes began incorporating dioramas and life actors, and the cast of characters gradually expanded beyond Mary, Joseph and sweet baby Jesus, to sometimes include an entire village.

Nativity buffs will know, however, that the familiar cast of characters relied upon today—the three wise men and the shepherds—is not strictly biblically accurate. Of the New Testament's four gospels, only Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth. Matthew mentions wise men, while Luke comments on shepherds. But nowhere in the Bible do shepherds and wise men appear together. What's worse, no one mentions donkeys, oxen, cattle or other farmyard friends in conjunction with Jesus' birth. But what would a nativity scene be without those staples? Luckily for all the kids cast as King #2 or random shepherd, some artistic interpretation is permitted.



Symbolism is important to mankind, it stirs our inner spirit to the passions any individual moment might evoke, it compels our hearts to join the spirit of an occasion. So the humble nativity scene (even the western sanitised edition) plays a significant part in our celebration of the redeeming life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

# FROM THE CEO'S DESK



For the past 10 years or so TeamNews has been a publication edited and produced in-house by a team of staff and volunteers. When I first started with MMM over 8 years ago it looked much different but very similar, prior to its current form we used to produce MMM News which was a full color professionally printed 'magazine'. The shift to in-house publications was a necessity to reduce the costs of production.

For the past 5 years the production work has been done by MMM Associate Jason Blockey, who then lived in Darwin (now Sydney based). Jason volunteers his time to compile the various articles and uses his creative skills in graphic design to create each edition. The final editing is done by our national office admin team, and has then been printed in-house by a team of volunteers in the New South Wales office and mailed out from the tiny Wyee post office, Greg & Robyn Jackson have co-ordinated this team effort.

Some time ago we made the decision to return to a professionally printed magazine style MMM News. Since that decision was made Covid and a whole bunch of other issues have delayed the transition, but we have now committed to the new (old) format commencing in 2022. The biggest hurdle has been the graphic design element, as the in-house editions used the basics of MS Publisher to create the publication and we needed a different toolset to produce a print ready format for our printers. Jason has completed an on-line training course in the new toolset and is ready to go. This saves the \$1,500 to \$2,000 in commercial graphic design costs for each edition, thanks Jason – you're a great volunteer.

Each of the regions will continue to produce and distribute their local TeamNews to keep the local teams and supporters up to date on upcoming projects, events and people news. We are constantly reviewing our communication processes and strategies to ensure our volunteers and supporters are well informed about what God has been doing, events that are coming up, and of course opportunities to serve. The move back to a glossy print style of MMM News is the next step in ensuring we can reach as many people as possible in the right format.



As we head towards Christmas the restrictions and limitations that have been a part of our everyday life for almost two years are being lifted, movement around the nation is becoming possible, and importantly churches are once again filling with people hungry to worship together. The effect of this pandemic will be with us for years to come, changes will continue to occur in our daily lives as we resume somewhat normal daily activities again. The one thing that has never changed is our God, who remains the one constant we can depend upon.

As you read this edition of TeamNews we will have completed our Annual General Meeting and also delivered our Annual Report to associates & members. We reported on a year where God has continued to supply our needs. We have seen some great outcomes from a year where we could easily have gone backwards. We reported just over 70 projects completed with almost 21,000 project hours, worth a staggering \$2.7m in volunteer project work.

We recorded a surplus budget outcome for the second successive year, and our budget forecast for the 2021/22 year is also for a surplus outcome. It has been a

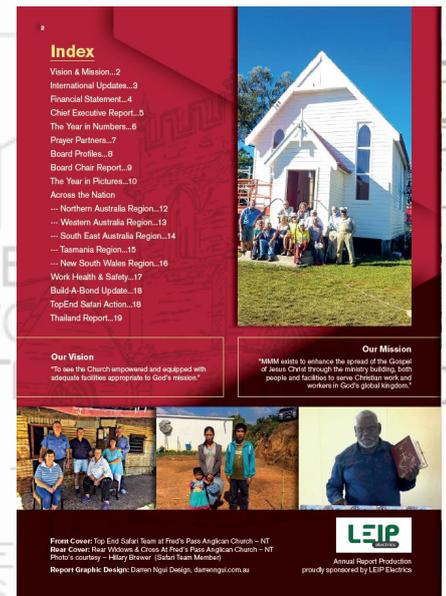
long and hard journey to transform the finances but we are now on track to grow and to expand as we look towards another challenging year.

As this year draws to a close, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous 2022 and beyond.

Much Blessings



**Terrence Baxter**  
Chief Executive Officer

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**Our Vision**  
"To see the Church empowered and equipped with adequate facilities appropriate to God's mission."

**Our Mission**  
"MMM exists to enhance the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the ministry building, both people and facilities to serve Christian work and workers in God's global kingdom."

**LEIP**  
Annual Report Production  
proudly sponsored by LEIP Electric

Front Cover: Top End Safari Team at Fred's Pass Anglican Church - NT  
Rear Cover: Irene Williams & Christal Reid's Peace Anglican Church - NT  
Photo's courtesy - Hilary Brewer (Safari Team Member)  
Report Graphic Design: Darren Ngai Design, darrenngai.com.au

# PROJECT HAPPENINGS



news and images on recent projects & project teams from across the nation.

## NSW Team back into it

After month's locked away and unable to travel the MMM NSW Team were back into it with passion and zeal. For the past several years the November timeslot in the schedule was allocated to the Katoomba Christian Convention site for a two-week project on their maintenance needs. However, this year KCC managed to get a lot of their maintenance done throughout the lockdown period when the normally busy convention site was empty.



*Bethshan Project Team*



*Greg at Work*

So the next available location was the Bethshan Campsite at Wyee managed by Colin Gregory. Colin had a list longer than his arm of things great and small that needed attention, so the team (camped at the NSW MMM Base 4 doors down the street) invested a healthy two weeks painting and renovating their main conference room, dining room, dormitories, and bathrooms, as well as relocating a kitchen and some major electrical work (thanks to John Blade).

All-in-all a pretty big effort from the team and a great outcome. Apparently Colin hasn't stopped smiling!!!



*Door Work*



*Painting on High*



*Main Hall*



*Paint Master*

## Blue Lagoon Hero's

The Blue Lagoon Campsite at Dodges Ferry near Hobart has been the venue for many MMM projects over the years. In October our faithful Tassie project team headed back there again for a week to undertake several significant maintenance & upkeep tasks. For several team members this was their first (hopefully of many) projects with MMM.

Joining the team for the first time this year was Gloria Scott, Gloria and Graham had done many projects there over the years and it was so special to have her back with the team. It was a time of challenge and also one of healing.

With 13 team members throughout the week the team achieved an enormous amount of work on both the campsite and Peter & Kathy's residence. Great effort team – every one of you are hero's!!!



*Decking Work*



*Gloria Scott*

MMM Projects Office

Phone: 03 9837 2700; Email: [projects@mmm.org.au](mailto:projects@mmm.org.au)



*Dale Richardson*

One of the key functions of the Board of Management of a not for profit organisation is to ensure that the organisation is meeting all its financial and legal responsibilities in all areas of its operations. This includes ensuring that the organisation is financially viable and can meet its obligations.

As Chairman of the Board of MMM Australia it has been wonderfully reassuring to watch how God is continuing to provide for and bless our organisation. It is pleasing to be able to report an operating surplus for the 20/21 financial year. Even though our operations and fund-raising activities have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic in various parts of the country. Funds have come in from other unexpected sources.

The Board of Management is also responsible for ensuring that the organisation is operating in accordance with its core mission (*purpose for existence*) and to establish suitable operational policies. The current pandemic has caused issues for most organisations in Australia, this includes MMM. Not only have fundraising operations been curtailed but projects have been cancelled or postponed as a direct response to emergency laws introduced by various State governments.

State governments have also introduced different operational and vaccination requirements which makes a common approach to operations difficult. MMM operates in all States and Territories across the country. In response to this situation the MMM Board established a small subcommittee to consider and draft a new policy on vaccination requirements. The purpose was to provide guidance for our national (*and global*) operations.

It was pleasing to have two of our newest Board members volunteer (*Andrew McCulloch and Paul Bradley*) join with our CEO Terrence Baxter to discuss and develop a draft policy for consideration.

State government's vaccination requirements vary significantly. With some states mandating vaccination for operations and others taking a different approach. As we all know this has caused significant dissention across the country with many people not agreeing with mandatory vaccination. Everyone has needed to make their own decision on vaccination.

The Board sub committee needed to consider the range of requirements imposed by governments but also look at our moral, ethical and Christian responsibilities. In response, the subcommittee has considered what is written in the Bible in working through the rationale for this policy. Some of the key issues considered included caring and loving your neighbour, compliance with laws and being a positive witness in the community.

This has resulted in the development of a policy which has its rationale based on scriptural teaching. It allows for freedom of choice by individuals but outlines the organisations responsibility to comply with local requirements.

I know that this topic draws out many strong and varied opinions but as Christians and as a Christian organisation we must ensure that our priority is to love God and then secondly love others as ourselves (*John 13: 34-35*). This will put our focus where it needs to be on loving and serving Him.

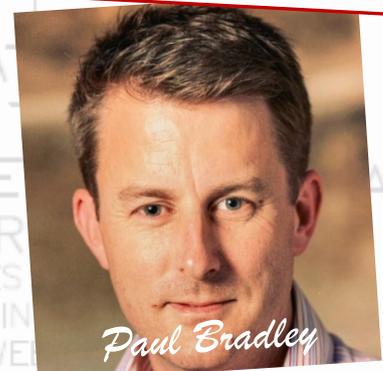
If you would like to read this policy, it is available on [www.mmm.org.au](http://www.mmm.org.au) by contacting reception at head office or by talking to any of our regional managers.

**Dale Richardson**

Board Chairman  
MMM Australia



*Andrew McCulloch*



*Paul Bradley*

**Vaccination Policy**

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**1. Scope**  
This policy applies to:

- all staff, including: managers and supervisors; full-time, part-time
- contractors and sub-contractors
- volunteers

This policy should be considered in conjunction with all MMM Australia's workplace safety procedures and site management policies.

**2. Aims**  
MMM recognises that the issue of vaccination of staff and volunteers is a complex issue that has the potential to polarise our community. This policy has been developed with the interests of complying with Federal and State legislation(s), international travel directives, as well ensuring the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, clients, and broader communities we serve.

**3. Guiding Principles**

- We want to be a positive witness in the communities in which we serve, exceeding our duty of care to those to whom we minister, especially the vulnerable. (*Ephesians 4:1-6, Romans 14:1, James 1:27, Philippians 2:3-4*)
- We want to obey the laws of the lands in which we serve, placing the good of the wider community above our individual rights. (*Romans 13:1-7, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:13-17, Titus 3:1-2, 1 Timothy 2:1-3*)
- We wish to undertake our work in a spirit of grace and respect, recognising that some may have different views on this topic and we will respect the right to different opinions whilst still ensuring compliance with our legal, ethical and relational obligations. Individuals working and volunteering with MMM have full discretion in their decision to take up a vaccination or not, however a decision not to be vaccinated may result in limitations on the work and ministry that can then be undertaken.

# PEOPLE NEWS



## Baby Boom!

In case you missed our last TeamNews edition we wanted to share this joy, there is a Baby Boom happening across MMM. Queensland Volunteers Josh & Trish Baade are expecting their first baby in February 2022, the Mango Hill property will be blessed with the sound of a baby waiting to be fed or changed (or both) – Congratulations Josh & Trish, we eagerly await the first pics of your new family member in the MMM Fluro Safety Vest ready for work!



National Prayer Coordinator Robyn Fedrick and husband Aaron are awaiting the arrival of their daughter in April. We've waited so long for this great news. Robyn had been busy on her knee's dealing with hyperemesis gravidarum (morning sickness) but has been improving and progressing well. No doubt one or two monthly prayer fellowships might be interrupted in 2022 by the sound of baby joy! Congratulations Robyn & Aaron.

## Darwin Representation

Victorian volunteer Andrew Denny is relocating again to Darwin after 15 years away from the tropical city. Andrew & Jonea have sold their Gippsland plumbing business, and their Warragul house and are relocating back to family in the TopEnd. Andrew approached MMM CEO Terrence Baxter with their plans in early 2021, and together they have prayed and believe God has orchestrated this move.



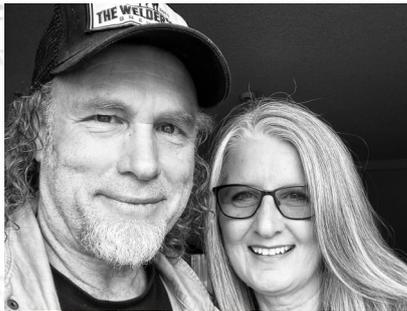
*The Denny Family*

Andrew will be looking to serve God in a variety of ways in the Territory and will be acting as our MMM "point man" assisting when and how needed on projects and as a contact point. We will have more info on Andrew and the families plans next year after Terrence visits the region in early 2022.

## Steve Grace

Singer, songwriter, evangelist, Steve Grace has been our National Patron for the past 3 years, unfortunately with the pandemic restrictions and border closures Steve's ministry on the road has been severely impacted with the majority of his income vanishing. Steve has been blessed by the support of a good friend in the Northern Territory who employed him to spray paint his farm machinery. (Steve is a spray painter by trade)

Over the past 18 months he has been spray painting everything that moves on the remote NT farm and has had the time to develop his artistic painting skills with some magnificent outback landscape paintings. His first love is the ministry God has called him to, singing and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the nation, including many rural and indigenous communities in Outback Australia. Please pray for Steve and Kerrie that their evangelistic ministry will open up again and they can once again have the spiritual impact around the nation he was called to have.



## Thanks David Graham

David Graham's service as state committee chair in Victoria has been recognised at the 2021 MMM AGM. David started volunteering with MMM at a time when we had no region manager and no state committee here in Victoria. His first project was at Southern Community Church of Christ in Cheltenham where David, Cedric Wyndham, and Ross Towns worked to lay a floating floor over the old church hall to give it a new lease of life in the community. David stepped up to the committee when it was re-established and served as the Committee Chair for 6 years. **Thanks David for your tireless efforts!**



# DONATE

## Direct Deposit

Bank: Westpac

Acc Name: MMM Australia

BSB: 033-349 Acc N°: 541089

Description: <Your Name> Donation

Cheques to: MMM Australia

Mail to: 5/621 Whitehorse Rd  
Mitcham VIC 3132

Credit Card: via our secure website  
[www.mmm.org.au](http://www.mmm.org.au)

# PRAYER

## PRAYER POINTS

We will be praying for all of our volunteers and staff over the Christmas—New Year period that you will enjoy a blessed time with family and friends celebrating the greatest gift of all.

We pray for peace, health, and safety for everyone in their travels and their celebrations

Continue to pray for Steve Grace as he serves God preparing for a fruitful and productive 2022

Pray for Robyn Fedrick and Trish Baade to know health, strength, and vitality and for the wonderful babies they are carrying.

Pray for our finances, that God will bless MMM with abundance to do every good work, and that through that abundance we can bless others.

Pray for our Board, especially for new Board candidates who are considering service on the MMM Australia Board. Pray they will know the good and perfect will of God in this decision.

Pray for new volunteers in every state to join with MMM in serving those who serve. Pray also for volunteers to assist with administration duties.

Pray for a key leader to take up the role as National Associates Coordinator in 2022.

Give thanks for a great National Day of Prayer and all the churches and individuals that prayed throughout the day for the ministry of MMM Australia.

Pray for a fruitful and productive 2022 for MMM projects.

**Thanks for your prayer support in 2021**

MMM PRAYER Needs

## WHATS IN A NAME?

We are looking for a great name for our 2022 newsletter publication.

so

We're throwing it open to everyone to make a suggestion!

**put your thinking cap on  
get creative  
give us your best suggestion**

Maximum of 13 characters  
Building Related  
No Trade Names

Submissions by January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022  
to  
[admin@mmm.org.au](mailto:admin@mmm.org.au)

Once again, it's time to **CELEBRATE**  
and **GIVE THANKS!**

RSVP appreciated by January 15 to [ruth@mmm.org.au](mailto:ruth@mmm.org.au) or to Ruth on 0438 016 961

Please come along

on Saturday, January 22, 2022

between 2:00pm and 5:00pm

to celebrate and give thanks

With an afternoon tea & plenty of fellowship at the MMM Centre, 40 Edward Street, Perth



## Thank you for praying...!

What a year! As I sit here writing and reflecting on the year that has been, I have to say I am so impressed with the resilience and adaptability so many of you have shown. Throughout most of the year here at Head Office, our monthly prayer meetings continued online via Zoom and we had a great team of prayer warriors consistently showing up, persisting with learning new technology and joining us online. Our last monthly meeting was held mid-November and we had a wonderful time of fellowship and praying together. I am so tremendously blessed to be part of such an amazing prayer team.

Also a big thank-you to all our prayer teams around the nation who met to pray throughout the year. It's not only our prayer teams who are praying, but also our project teams who spend each morning with a devotion and time of prayer. We have seen so many answers to prayer this year and I truly believe it is because of the faithfulness of all those who have been praying. God truly hears and answers our prayers.

As you read this edition of TeamNews, we will have just held our **National Day of Prayer** on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December. This is such a special day for us where so many, both individuals and churches, set aside time to pray specifically into the needs of MMM Australia and the work God is doing here. This year our normal schedule of October for this event wasn't possible, so we committed to a December timeframe, and it's been a very positive move with a significant number of churches and individuals joining with us to pray for the ministry and needs of MMM Australia.

Prayer is key to everything we do and we wholeheartedly lean on God, seek His direction and guidance in all our decisions and the work we do. We had many register their commitment to set aside 30 minutes to pray for MMM. Many churches also registered their commitment to set aside a few minutes in their church services to pray for us, with some also playing a short video to their church of the work MMM does.

As we come to the end of another year, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and pray that you will have peace and a time of refreshing over the holidays.

Much Blessings

**Robyn Fedrick**  
National Prayer Coordinator

