



# RNDM AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE



**CELEBRATING 118 YEARS  
OF MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT**



# RNDM AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA PERTH

Highgate	1897—2000
Freemantle	1902—1987
Busselton	1903—1922
Menzies	1910—1912
Wagin	1913—1970
Narrogin	1918— 1998
Maylands	1926 - 2015
Katanning	1926—1988
Rockingham	1948— 2005
Palmyra	1952—1970
Sorrento	1967 - 1988
Lake Grace	1970—1992
Rossmoyne	2004—2012
Mary Street	2000 -2010
Palmyra	1978—2007
Glendalough/ (Mt. Hawthorne)	1981—2015
Karrinyup	1988—2009
Armadaile	1993—1996
Busselton Margaret	1995—2009
Hubery Village	2004—2009
Bayswater	2006—2015
Shelley	2009-
North Perth	2010-
Inglewood	2015 -

## KIMBERLEYS

Broome	1974 - 2007
Beagle Bay	1987— 1997
Gibb River	1991— 2000

## EASTERN AUSTRALIA MELBOURNE

Donald	1922—1961
Charlton	1924—1968
Oakleigh	1934 —1985
East Kew	1941—1994
Mt Eliza	1941—1997
Hawthorn	1985—1997
Keysborough	1986 —1987
South Melb.	1987—1993
Greensborough	1974 -1975
Mulgrave	1989 —1995
Box Hill	1991—2008
W. Sunshine /Keilor	1991— 2014
Dandenong	1992—1994
Toowong (Q )	1993—1996
Balwyn	1994 -
Greythorn	1994 —2000
Surrey Hills	1994 -
Balwyn/Deepdene	1996
Box Hill North	1997 -
Ivanhoe	2002 -
Balwyn East	2004-
Mont Albert	2014-
Doncaster E	2010-
Packenham	2014 -
Doncaster/ Finance Offrice	2015-

## CANBERRA

1968—1982

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1969— 2012

Ialibu, Pangia

Madang

Wiliame,



**FOUNDED  
1897**

# **A U S T R A L I A N P R O V I N C E**



**T**he emblem worn by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions was designed to celebrate the presence of God among all people across the world.

In the Australian logo the emblem stands amid gum and wattle, beautiful and unique features of our Australian environment and culture.

Like the reign of God which the Sisters proclaim, the gum and wattle are full of promise and potential for life.

As a multi-cultural nation we have people whose origins are representative of more nations than any other country in the world. The majority of people live in the Capital Cities, especially Sydney and Melbourne.

As an International Missionary Congregation, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions first arrived in Australia in 1897, the first foundation being in Highgate, Perth, Western Australia.

This convent was the Provincial and Novitiate House of the Sisters, where young women were formed and prepared for mission. They went out from here guided by the Holy Spirit, and with joyful hearts, to spread God's love.

At present there are Sisters in Western Australia, in Victoria and four Sisters are working overseas in Senegal, Kenya, Philippines and Rome.

The locations of our communities in Australia today including some communities of retired Sisters comprise: Perth Western Australia—Rossmoyne, Shelley and Inglewood.

Victoria – Surrey Hills, Deepene, Balwyn East, Balwyn, Ivanhoe and Doncaster East.



## SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Sisters  
St  
Moth-

On October 9th, 1897 the first five set foot in Western Australia. They were Mother M. Genevieve Henley, Mother M. St Gregory Mitchie, Mother M. St. Eudoxie Connor and Sister Irene O'Reilly.

All were from New Zealand. In 'The Record' of 23rd October, the following news item appeared: 'Tuesday of last week added yet another 'red letter' day in the Catholic Annals of Western Australia, for on that day there arrived in Perth five nuns of the famous teaching Congregation of Notre Dame des Missions'

The Sisters took up their abode in Vincent Street and by the 25th October, 1897 classes had already begun with an attendance of 38. The school was a temporary erection of corrugated iron, and was furnished with a few forms. The heat, small flies and mosquitoes made life very difficult.



By 1902 there were sixteen members of the Congregation in W.A. All of them had come from New Zealand, Ireland, England or France. The Australian novitiate opened with five young women. Within 15 years there were forty Sisters, three new communities, two in remote country areas, a novitiate where twenty-five Australian young women had been received, two high schools and three primary schools.

During the next thirty years the sisters were inspired to establish schools in the West and East of Australia, in country towns and in the cities. By 1930 a symbol of excellence was expressed in the motto of our secondary schools:

'Semper Superne Nitens' .

Always striving upwards.





Commemorative Stained Glass in the  
Our Lady of the Missions Catholic  
Pastoral Centre, Highgate

The stained glass panels in the door  
leading from the former convent to  
the Parish Church were a gift from  
the Sisters of Our Lady of the  
Missions to the new Archdiocesan  
Pastoral Centre opened in 2004.

The window panels were designed by  
Sr. Helena Brabender and beautifully  
crafted by Mr. Vic Burns a gifted  
craftsman in stained glass.

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## TOP PANEL

**SHIP** – Journey of the five pioneering RNDM Sisters from New Zealand

**SAILS** – Stylised map of Australia – their destination

**FIVE FIGURES** – The five foundation Sisters  
yellow section depicts their dreams and vision for their future mission.

**RED SEMI** – CIRCLE – Community aspects – unity vowed life.

**INSERTS** – Right – Convent Highgate:  
left – Sacred Heart School monogram.

**SUNSET** – Passing of the years: dedication, enabling and empowering the laity to take their rightful role in the Church: the hope that comes with the dawning of a new day.

## BOTTOM PANEL

RNDM Logo – International emblem of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, surrounded by Australian flora of gum leaf and Wattle.

**BLUE GLOBE** – Mandate of the Sisters as a international missionary Congregation to work internationally and in cultures other than their own.

**BOOK** – The Scripture and Constitutions basic to the Sisters' way of life; also symbolises Book of Knowledge as education was the primary mission of the Sisters.

**WATER** – Fulfilment of Baptismal commitment to be missionary and prophetic.

**GRAPES & WHEAT** – The Sacramental life which gives spiritual nourishment and strength.

**DOVE** – Holy Spirit – Pentecost – Patronal Feast of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions.

**RED RAYS** – Gifts of the Holy Spirit which give life and direction to the RNDM charism.

Commissioned by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, this commemorative stained glass window recognises over 115 years of missionary service by the Sisters throughout Australia.

They are a tribute to the living memory of all the RNDM Australian Sisters and an inspiration for those who are yet to come.

# CELEBRATING 154 YEARS

## Treasuring Our Past Shaping Our Future



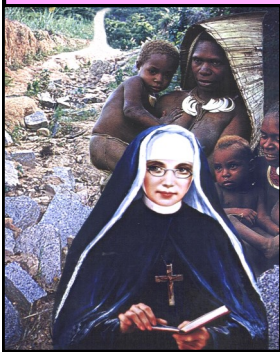
When the Congregation was first founded in Australia, there was a constant movement of Sisters coming into Australia and others being 'missioned' to the newly established houses.

In 1916 Sister M St. Ambrose was missioned to India and for forty years was a source of inspiration to our Asian sisters.

Soon after in 1920 Sister Lucille Benny was missioned to Chittagong, Bangladesh and stayed there for 40 years. During the Second World War Sister Lucille was subjected to brutal treatment while imprisoned by the Japanese. The following year in 1921 another valiant missionary Sr. Vincent Linney was sent to India and spent time in Burma and Bangladesh. In all she gave forty years of service. In 1927 Sr. Mary St. Catherine Harris was missioned to Indo-China. Because of the war the Sisters fled from Thanh-Hoa, North Vietnam in 1954, they endured extraordinary and unpleasant conditions on an eight day trip south in a sampan. Sr. Catherine's health deteriorated and she died in July of 1954. We consider her our first Australian RNDM martyr.



In 1969 the Australian Province responded to an invitation by the then Bishop of Mendi, Firmin Schmidt ofmCap. to send Sisters to the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. This new territory was only opened to the outside world in 1954 and was virtually new and unexplored. Initially four Sisters from Australia entered the mission but over the next forty years sisters from around the world gave service in this isolated and difficult mission.



It was in 1974 that three RNDM Sisters went to the Aboriginal Mission in Broome in answer to a request from Bishop Jobst. The Kimberley mission began for the RNDMs at Nulungu Girls' College, Broome. Later further sisters were missioned to Beagle Bay and Gibb River. Sr. Helena Brabender who was among the first three to go to Broome left the College in 2007. This was the conclusion of RNDM presence in the Kimberleys.

In the intervening years Australian Sisters moved to missions in Senegal, Kenya, Latin America, Germany, Philippines and Rome. For many years the majority of sisters in Australia were involved in Education at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level. A few sisters branched out into nursing and pastoral care in Parishes.

Today the sisters are involved in the giving of retreats, Spiritual Direction and Counselling, Facilitation and Consultancy,

Education with Indigenous people,  
Vietnamese and Korean immigrants, prison ministry.

Adult Faith Education

Parish and Pastoral work

Teaching (primary & Secondary), tutoring (Kip McGrath),  
Sacred Heart Girls' College consultant.

Pastoral care for the aged,

Ministry of Advocacy for intellectually disabled young adults

Contribution to the education of our young Sisters  
both at home and overseas,

Archival Work

Province Administration.

RNDM International Mission Office

Australian Mission Office



Sr. Helena Brabender with some of her art students at Nulungu Girls' College, Broome



## PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

While we

are no longer involved full time in the College we are involved in a variety of ways. Sister Madeleine Barlow works at the college in a consultative role on RNDM spirit and mission. The College welcomes visits from RNDM sisters from overseas who share their missionary experience with the students and staff.

In recent years the College has grown in its understanding of its missionary spirit inherited from the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. As the College grew new buildings were added and were named after the Sisters. The Sr. Theresa Parish Building was opened in the mid 1980's, then came the Our Lady of the Missions Building with a large RNDM emblem on it, then the Euphrasie Barbier Building, and most recently the Jubilee Building to honour the 50th anniversary of the opening of the College.

As part of the celebrations of the 50th Jubilee a commemorative stained glass window designed by Sr. Helena Brabender was installed in the Jubilee Library. This window tells the story of RNDM mission and the history at Sacred Heart.



**Centre Flame:** symbolizing the name of the College, Sacred Heart Girls College, as well as the torch of knowledge.

**Blue Globe/Foundation Members:** show the Internationality of the Sisters, whose missionary legacy and spirit embraces all cultures and continues to be an inspiration for the college today.

**Water & Eucharistic Symbols:** reflects the fountain of life rising up in each one through baptism, and nourished through life by the Word and the Eucharist.

**Seeds/Wheat:** represent the young women growing to maturity throughout their years in the college and the potential they take out into the world.

**Dove:** The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove of peace, reminds us of the creative energy of the Spirit of God that has enabled the college story to unfold.

**Dancing Figure:** surrounded by a rainbow of colour, expresses the sense of joy and happiness that pervades the spirit of the college as well as the sense of fulfilment due to the many achievements in all aspects of college life.



Mr. Christopher Dalton (Principal) and students.

The present pupils are eager participants in their walkathon to raise funds for the works of the Sisters in developing countries throughout the world.

[For further information see the above website.](#)



## Sacred Heart College, Sorrento

[www.sacredheart.wa.edu.au](http://www.sacredheart.wa.edu.au)

The College was established in 1967 by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions who over a period of years since 1897 have operated various schools in Highgate, Fremantle and country areas of WA.

Sacred Heart College is a Catholic Co-Educational Secondary School offering education to boys and girls in Years 7-12. Initially a girls' school, the growth of the population in the surrounding suburbs gave rise to a need for the school to expand its number and enrol boys. The first group of boys was enrolled in 1977. The College is now fully co-educational with an intake of approximately 200 students in Year 7. The full student enrolment is approximately 1170.

Sacred Heart College, Sorrento Western Australia has pursued the RNDM missionary charism by its sponsorship and annual insertion program in our Province of Vietnam. This has been a mutually enriching experience for staff, students and sisters as well as the wider Sacred Heart College Community.

*For further information see above website:*



## IMMERSION OF OUR SCHOOLS INTO RNDM MISSIONS

In the past decade many teachers and students from the two Colleges have been involved in immersion and teaching experiences in the Philippines and Vietnam. Sorrento teachers and students spent some time in Vietnam and teachers from Oakleigh and Sorrento go during school holidays to teach English to our young Sisters.

Each year several teachers from Oakleigh along with Sr. Madeleine Barlow head for the Philippines. The major focus of their trip is to visit the Manobo girls at Kulaman and the Kuya Centre for boys from the Manila streets. The College has adopted the Centre there as a 'sister school' and they have sent regular correspondence between teachers and students.

Each year the students at both colleges raise a considerable amount of money for the needy in both the Philippines and Vietnam. This money will greatly help the education and care of children who have no opportunity for schooling and life education were it not for our Sisters and the generosity of donors.

Both Colleges and all the primary schools connected to us are wonderful in their commitment to the mission of the Congregation.

Mr. Peter Bothe, Principal and students of Sacred Heart Sorrento with the RNDM Sisters at Thu Duc, Vietnam



## PARTNERSHIPS IN MISSION

**W**ithin our Australian Province there is a remarkable growth of awareness of and dedication to the world wide mission of the Congregation.

### Primary Schools

A number of our former Primary Schools have partnered school RNDM schools in India and Bangladesh.

Individuals, parish groups, and a variety of other types of groups have associated

themselves with particular missions and projects. We find their generosity quite overwhelming at times.

### Child Sponsorship

In 2011 we initiated another form of partnership through the possibility of child sponsorship. As of 2015 68 children are being sponsored in Bangladesh, India, Philippines, Africa, Vietnam and Myanmar.



Sr Madeleine Barlow with teachers and students of Sacred Heart Girls' College Oakleigh during a visit to Delesan Kailawan – a hostel for Menubo Tribal Girls in Kulaman, Mindanao.

## PARTNERS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*There are different styles and focuses of Partnership programs based on the choices of individuals. Some Partners become actively involved in the missions of the Sisters by volunteering their services to share in their ministries at home or going to an overseas mission to contribute their time and talent.*

*For others, being an Partner means prayer support and for others it means financial support of the works and missions of the Congregation.*

*We have about 200 Partners between the Melbourne and Western Australia. We welcome new members. There are at least two gatherings each year. They are kept in touch with the mission of the Congregation through the Australian newsletter and the International Mission newsletter. In the past volunteers have been with our Sisters in Ethiopia, Senegal, Papua New Guinea, India, Myanmar, Kenya, Bangladesh, Philippines and Vietnam.*



# PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

## PICTURE GALLERY



**VERONICA MARTIN**

Pastoral Worker in the Parish of Willetton

Personal Advocacy, a spiritual program for people with mental disabilities, SPRED is known in other parts of the world

Parish visitation of the Sick and Elderly



**MARIE THERESE RYDER**  
Provincial of the Australian Province

Spiritual Director, Faith Development, Facilitator



Shelly Barlow is involved in mission spirituality and adult enrichment in the areas of Mission, Scripture and the New Story of Creation



# PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA.



**RNDM Sisters residing in Perth**



**NORTH PERTH**  
Sr. Patricia Byrne  
Retired after working  
for more than 30 years  
with the Vietnamese  
Community in Perth.

**SR. FRANCES WILSON**  
Urban Aboriginal Catholic Ministry  
in Perth  
Kimberly Ministry (Pastoral  
Visitation)  
Support teacher to Aboriginal Girls  
at St Brigid's College, Lesmerdie  
Aged Care of RNDM Sisters in Perth



**ROSSMOYNE**  
Sr. Mechtilde  
Lane with her  
sister Marge.



**SR. ANNE NOONAN**  
Retired  
Knitting for RNDM Missions

# MELBOURNE VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

Sr Madeleine Barlow and a young Muslim woman travelling together in jeepney in Manila. After a pleasant chat the young woman asked if Madeleine realised she was a Muslim woman – for in her experience it was so rare for Muslims and Christians to speak together!



**GRADUATION DAY.** Sr Madeleine distributing prizes to Graduate Menubo Girls in Kulaman. These young girls completing primary School with great success, are among the first girls to have an education in their tribe. The hope is that in succeeding they will go on to further study and become leaders and educators among their own people,



**Sr. Patricia Keogh,**  
Teacher at Christ the Holy Redeemer School,  
Melbourne. She also does home visits which  
has now included the grandparents of the  
children. She is active in her parish



**Sr. Catherine  
Brabender,  
International Mission  
Office Co-ordinator.  
Facilitator  
Congregational  
Finance Consulter.**



**Sr. Helena Brabender,  
RNDM Finance office  
Melbourne**



**Sr. Maureen Belleville  
Pastoral Ministry at  
Sacred Heart Parish Kew  
Parish visitation**



**Sr Lorna Brown knitting for Asylum  
refugees. Lorna has gift of keeping in  
touch by correspondence with many of  
our younger Sisters worldwide.**

**Sr. Mary Kim Dung Vu employed  
by the Australian Vietnamese  
Women's Association in Victoria  
to work with female prisoners  
with an Asian background.**



***"The INDECOS  
program and  
specifically the work  
done by Sr. Kim Vu,  
has become an  
integral part of the  
treatment aspect of the  
Drug Treatment Order  
for clients from an  
Indo-Chinese  
background.***





**Sr. Helen Wilding with Sr. Mary Kim Vu.**



**Sr. Marie Crosbie. Retired after many years of Ministry to the Korean community**



**Sr. Tarcisius Clifton  
with Papa Oo from Myanmar**



**Sr. Theresa Parish  
101 years old.**

**RNDM Communities in the  
East (Melbourne)  
and the West (Perth)  
Australia**





**Sr. Maureen Dwan**  
Australian Mission  
Office

**Assistant  
International Mission  
Development Office**



**Sr. Helen Wilding with Sr. Mary Kim Vu.**



**Sr. Tarcisius Clifton  
with Papa Oo from Myanmar**



**Srs. Helena and Catherine Brabender with Pa-  
pa Oo from Myanmar who is undergoing ear  
replacement surgery in Melbourne.**



**Srs. Madeleine Barlow, Maureen Dwan and  
Alison Robinson IT programmer of Sacred  
Heart Girls' College, Oakleigh.  
at an in-house tutorial on Computer Skills.**

## AUSTRALIAN SISTERS SERVING OVERSEAS



**Sr. Kate O'Neill**  
Philippines



**Sr. Margaret Spain**  
Ndondol, Senegal



**Sr. Margaret McNerny**  
Kenya, Africa



**Sr. Carmel Eberius**  
Rome

## STUDENT SISTERS



**Phan Yen, (Pope Francis!), Thanh Huyen and Kim Hanh.**

**All studying in Perth, Western Australia with the exception of Pope Frances who resides in Rome!**

**Phan Yen is studying for a finance degree and Thanh Huyen and Kim Hanh who are studying English.**



**Thu Hang Troung beginning her English Studies in Melbourne. In 2016 she will join the staff at Sacred Heart College, Oakleigh**



# **RNDM SUPPORT STAFF**

## **PERTH OFFICE**



Mrs Andrea Creek  
Province Secretary

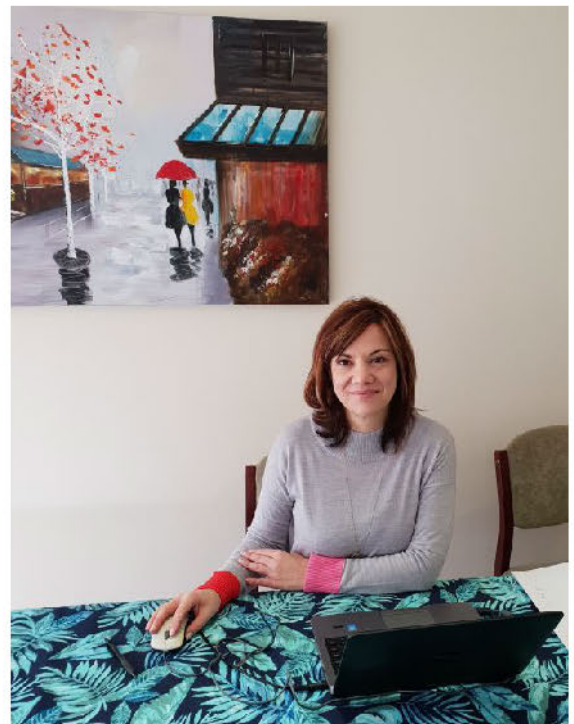


Mrs Julianne Davidson  
Province Assistant Finance Officer

## **MELBOURNE OFFICE**



Sister Helena Brabender RNDM  
Province Bursar



Mrs. Alfia Di Palma  
Province Finance Officer