

President's Report 2023 – 2024

“What was I thinking...?” This insidious thought has crept into my mind on a few occasions in this our first year, of taking on responsibility for the organisation of Library Aid International (LAI). But how **could** we just let such a wonderful charity lapse? They say it takes a community to raise a child. So many children, so many families and so many communities have benefited over so many years from what the LAI community has achieved. Its work was not complete. Yes, it has indeed been a challenging year, with so much to learn, especially taking on the partnership with Food Plants International. But there have been so many willing helpers, how can we not succeed? With God's help and the wonderful support from the original committee and so much support from many enthusiastic and committed local volunteers, we have developed a wonderful and efficient team.

The Kentish Council has been generous with its support allowing us to lease Beulah Hall, a spacious and well-equipped facility, for a peppercorn rent. Although we are still working out the terms of use with local residents, it has proven to be an ideal space for our working bees.

I have so many people to thank for their support. We are so grateful to the many generous donors. Thank you to the management of De Bruyn's Transport, for the ongoing support of LAI for the past 18 years. Their state-wide depots have been collection points for boxes of donated books which have been transported to our container in the East Devonport depot, free of charge. The container which was at Burnie, was relocated to their East Devonport depot to enable our local team to access donations, and also to store and access our new container, ready for shipment.

Another thank you goes to Stephen Upton at Tasmanian Cargo Services for his assistance with the shipment to the Solomon Islands last year, and with our current consignment to New Britain.

I cannot begin to thank people enough, especially the members of the committee for your support. A huge thank you to Ian Hubble, who has been of great assistance in contacting our donors and assisting with the logistics of running the organisation. A special thank you to Peter Cunningham, and what seems like his unlimited dedication and energy. For all the early morning starts each Monday; the countless trips he has made to DeBruyns, to move donated boxes from the storage shed to the container; from the container to fill his car up each week; the travel to Beulah, where he and the volunteers unload the donated books into the storeroom. And then the reverse...loading up the sorted boxes to take back to DeBruyns to go in the container. Believe me, it does not go unnoticed. We really appreciate what you are doing.

Thank you to our local volunteers who turn up so faithfully each week. Deborah has been an invaluable help in many aspects to keep our group running; assisting as minutes secretary and regular communication with our volunteers, as well as a faithful member of our working bee team. I have also been so impressed with our local volunteers who turn up so faithfully each week and are so skilled at what they are doing. A big thank you to Anita, Zara, Veena, Peter Donnelly, Bob and Mark.

Thank you also to all the schools, organisations and individuals who have donated books and educational materials to LAI. Be assured that they are valued by the children and greatly appreciated by the teachers overseas.

I use the words that Peter Cunningham used in his 2023 report, which seem so appropriate. *“Once again, we thank God for His continued goodness and grace that has enabled us to accomplish all of this. I pray that He will continue to bless the new committee, enabling them to send several more containers of books and educational materials to improve literacy, educational outcomes and life opportunities for children in disadvantaged schools in developing countries.”*

Leoni Read
(President)