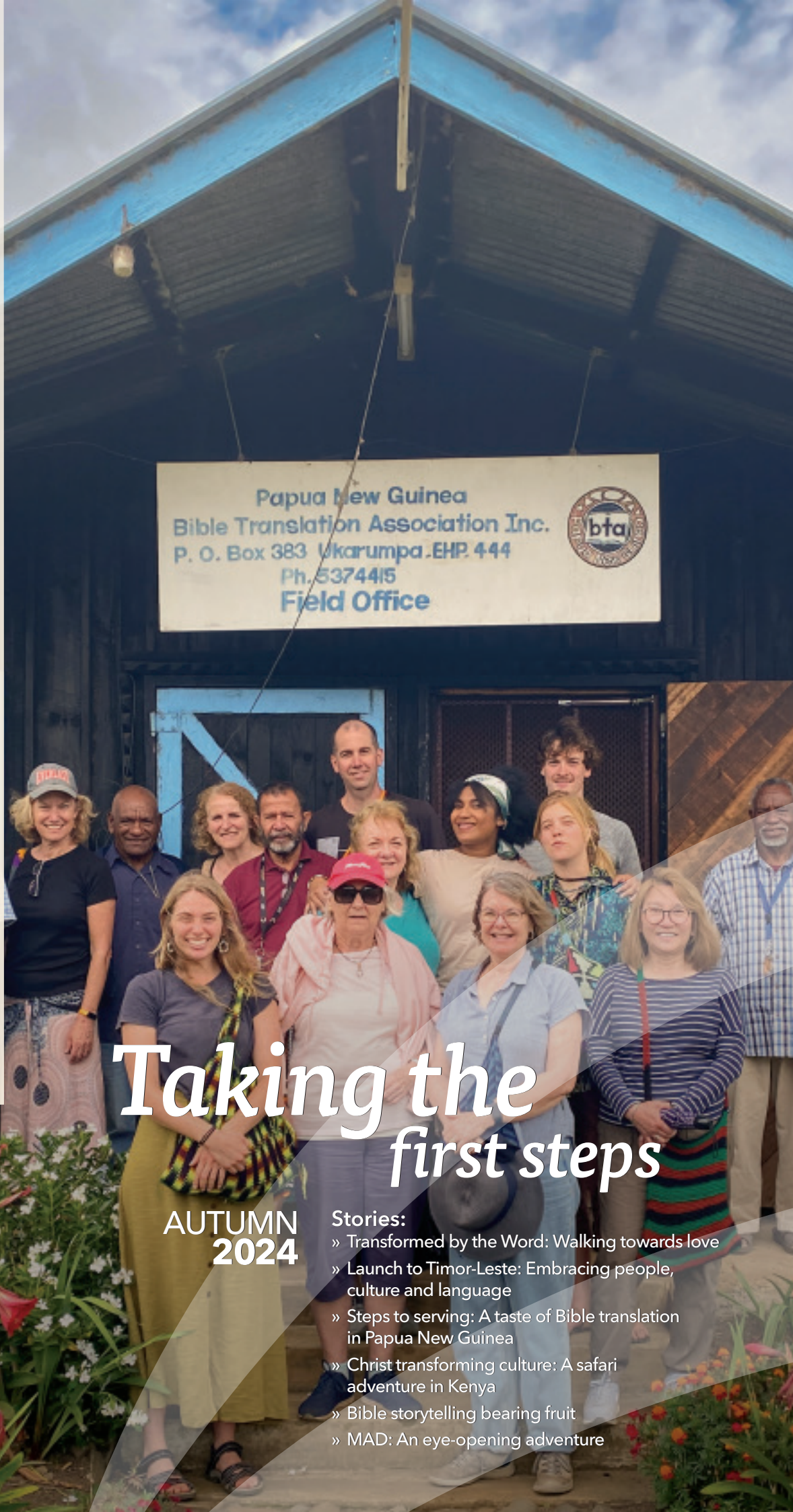




# Wycliffe Today

AUTUMN 2024 / VOL.12 / NO.1 / ISSN 2202-9818



## Taking the first steps

AUTUMN  
2024

### Stories:

- » Transformed by the Word: Walking towards love
- » Launch to Timor-Leste: Embracing people, culture and language
- » Steps to serving: A taste of Bible translation in Papua New Guinea
- » Christ transforming culture: A safari adventure in Kenya
- » Bible storytelling bearing fruit
- » MAD: An eye-opening adventure

To receive *Wycliffe Today* electronically, email [info@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:info@wycliffe.org.au)

**WYCLIFFE TODAY**  
Winter 2024, Vol. 12 / No. 1  
Published by:  
Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia  
70 Graham Road  
Kangaroo Ground VIC 3097  
ABN 22 004 705 953



[www.wycliffe.org.au](http://www.wycliffe.org.au)  
[www.facebook.com/wycliffeaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/wycliffeaustralia)

Enquiries: Editor, *Wycliffe Today*  
Ph: (03) 9712 2777  
E: [communications@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:communications@wycliffe.org.au)

Contributors: Max Sahl, Lyn Wake, Deb Fox, Helen Sahl, Ewa McMaster, John Tan.

Design: Peter Bergmeier  
Print: Classic Press  
Cover image: Marc Ewell

Articles may be freely reproduced, but please acknowledge *Wycliffe Today* or its sources as indicated in this publication.



Missions Interlink  
Member of Bible Agencies Australia

## Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia

**National Office**  
70 Graham Road  
Kangaroo Ground VIC 3097  
ABN 22 004 705 953  
Ph: (03) 9712 2777  
Fax: (03) 9712 2799  
Email: [info@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:info@wycliffe.org.au)  
[www.wycliffe.org.au](http://www.wycliffe.org.au)

## Editorial from the CEO



This year, Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia celebrates 70 years of working with God to transform lives through Bible translation, literacy, community development and Scripture engagement. Hundreds of men and women throughout the years have been trained to support Bible translation projects in Australia and throughout the world. They have all served in unique ways.

Wycliffe Australia has sent out people of vastly different backgrounds, from teachers and technicians, animators and accountants, to doctors and dog trainers. They have understood the need for people to access the Scriptures in the languages they understand best.

Despite their differences, these people all had something in common - their journeys all began with taking the first step. Taking that 'first step' can seem overwhelming but we don't have to take it alone. Along with the prayers and support of other believers, short-term exposure trips can be a great way to experience God at work through everyday Christians who have already taken that first step of faith.

The stories in this edition of *Wycliffe Today* showcase the experiences of people who have joined short-term trips to Bible translation projects in Australia, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. We hope you are encouraged by their stories and pray that God will give you the wisdom and courage to take the next step in your own adventure with him, wherever and whatever that may be.

Max Sahl

## BETHEL FUNERALS

Bethel Funerals' story began in 1997 as a business that provides Christ-like care to grieving families - while also financially supporting Wycliffe Australia.

Visit [bethelfunerals.com.au](http://bethelfunerals.com.au) for more information



**Wycliffe**  
Bible Translators

**NSW/ACT**  
Ph: (02) 8014 6487  
E: [nswro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:nswro@wycliffe.org.au)

**TAS**  
Ph: 0455 476 292  
E: [tasro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:tasro@wycliffe.org.au)

**WA**  
Ph: (08) 9243 0486  
E: [waro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:waro@wycliffe.org.au)

**QLD**  
Ph: (07) 3256 1803  
E: [qldro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:qldro@wycliffe.org.au)

**VIC**  
Ph: (03) 9712 2720  
E: [vicro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:vicro@wycliffe.org.au)

**SA/NT**  
E: [saro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:saro@wycliffe.org.au)

# Transformed by the Word Walking towards love

by Lyn Wake



*'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said. Matthew 14:28 - 29 (NIVUK)*

Imagine the mix of confusion, fear and excitement Peter must have experienced when he saw Jesus walking on water towards him. Peter's logic and emotions must have collided in a fierce battle as he wrestled with the impossible nature of the scene before his eyes.

How did he take that courageous first step? I believe Peter was able to move forward because he knew the voice of the one calling him. In stepping out of that boat, Peter knew he was walking towards love.

Recently, I witnessed our tiny granddaughter, Bonnie, take her very first steps. Although she only managed a couple of stumbles forward on her first attempt, we could not have been prouder. Joy beamed across her face as she took in our loving gazes and heard our many coos over all her 'achievements'.

My son and his wife continued calling their daughter to come to them, with big sister Zahlia cheering her on. After all our encouragement, she took those first baby steps and learned to walk - all because she knew the voice of her family and that she was walking towards love.

Friends, living an abundant life in Christ begins with a first step of faith ... and moves on with fresh steps of faith each day. Where are you on your faith journey? Have you heard Jesus calling you towards an impossible adventure? Have you dipped your toe into the water, but now feel unsure how to step out onto the deep waters?

The one who calls you is gazing upon you with love. He will not let you drown. May you walk towards him in love, and keep walking.

**For reflection:** Can you identify anything that may be stopping you from 'getting out of the boat' towards Jesus and what he is calling you to?

**Be transformed by the Word:** Engage with Matthew 14:22-36 & Psalm 27:7-14.

**Prayer:** *Lord, I choose to walk towards your love. Please help me take the first steps towards the adventure you are calling me to. Amen.*

## Launch to Timor-Leste: Embracing people, culture and language

by John Tan

John and Remy Tan are Wycliffe Australia members based at the National Centre in Melbourne. They recently spent six weeks in Timor-Leste to assist in the Australia Timor-Leste Group (ATG) office in Dili. John explains how the training he and Remy received through SIL Australia's (SILA) language learning and cultural awareness course, Launch, prepared them for their time away.

We found our 'workation' in Timor-Leste to be a refreshing time with the Lord. I helped record and edit the books of Ruth and Mark in the local Mambae language. Remy led an in-house staff training session on record keeping and management.



When you spend time with people from a different country and language, it helps to immerse yourself in their culture. I thought SILA's Launch course prepared us well for this assignment. The four modules of the course laid the foundation for our positive service in Timor-Leste:

**Language Learning:** Most Timorese people know many languages, but they are more comfortable using their national language of Tetum Dili compared to English. While they practised English, we practised Tetum Dili by getting used to sounds over lunchtime conversations and attending church services. We added to our vocabulary by using 'power-tool phrases' like 'how do you say ...?' then reviewed everything by reading Scripture and a dictionary.

**Language Awareness:** As time went on, we learned to construct our own sentences, as we learned how to arrange noun and verb phrases and other words in the right order.

**Phonetics:** My assignment in Dili was to record two books of the Bible in the Mambae language. The phonetics training helped me listen for voiced and voiceless consonants, aspiration and plosives. This helped me know what to look for in the audio wave diagrams as I was editing.

**Cultural Anthropology:** I found it interesting to learn about the Timorese people: their worldview, mythology, geography and history. They also invited us to weddings and welcomed us into their lives. We felt embraced by the people and will treasure the time we spent in Timor-Leste.



**Inquiries are now open for Launch 2025 enrolments.**  
Visit [sila.org.au/courses/summer-school/](https://sila.org.au/courses/summer-school/)  
for more information.

# Steps to serving:

## *A taste of Bible translation in Papua New Guinea*

By Helen Sahl and Ewa McMaster

*Papua New Guinea is recognised as one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with over 800 languages still being spoken in a country with a population of fewer than 10 million people.*

The language needs in the region are vast. Ukarumpa is an international SIL community that was created to serve as a hub for Bible translation throughout Papua New Guinea. It was chosen as the location for a short-term exposure trip to give Aussies a taste of the work Wycliffe Australia supports and discover the range of roles needed for Bible translation and language development to happen.



THE AUSTRALIAN TEAM WITH LOCAL TRANSLATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF

As soon as we began talking about the possibility of running a trip to PNG, we made prayer a priority. This needed to be God's trip and we were going to follow him. As Moses said to God in Exodus 33:15,

if he wasn't leading us then we didn't want to go. We saw answers to our prayers as a team of 12 came together, person by person, from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria from all ages and all backgrounds. We saw God's hand in everything from the team dynamic, to the program, the travel arrangements and meeting people all along the way.



HELEN SAHL IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

The impact on the participants was overwhelmingly positive. They had opportunities throughout the trip to visit many departments in Ukarumpa, including a Bible training centre, medical ministry and to make village visits. This opened their eyes to the needs for more people to help with finance, information technology, teaching, maintenance, building, management, mentoring, linguistics, literacy, Scripture engagement and much more. They were challenged to consider how they could be involved in helping Bible translation happen in PNG.

Hearing the hearts of our Papua New Guinean brothers and sisters was so special. We visited homes, villages, gardens and walked places together. Our team were great listeners and learners. A bonus was seeing the team reach out to others who were staying at the Ukarumpa guesthouse, including a film crew and visiting linguists.

Many of the Ukarumpa residents interacted with the group, inviting us to their homes and spending time with us over meals in the evenings. We thank God for the privilege of leading this team and pray that many more will consider how they could serve others in the Bible translation task. Several of the group are seriously looking at how they might be able to serve at Ukarumpa, or follow a path into Bible translation and language development.



GREAT TIMES WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



THE GROUP ARRIVES IN UKARUMPA

*Feedback from participants:*

Since my trip to PNG, I have come to the realisation that it is so important to 'do life' with people. I felt stirred to offer comfort to people around me not just in words but in action - that's where the kindness of God has the capacity to touch a human soul. I ask God that this stirring within me will continue so I can put it into action. - Nathan

I secretly thought, 'Why am I doing this? Oh well, I'm committed now, I'll just go through with it. When I come back I will probably say, "Well that was inconvenient ... and costly ... and nothing will come of it!"' I was so wrong. Right from the outset, I realised that God had put me into a very special team of people, diverse in age and background, skills and personality, but all with a generous passion for God and the people his heart yearns for. What a valuable investment of two weeks! I am pretty sure something wonderful will come of it. - lanthe

We have made friends for life on this trip. I wouldn't have changed anything. I loved the way you gave us time to process what we were seeing and learning, to chat, to share with each other, to debrief each evening. I loved getting to know everyone on the team so much! - Karen

**MORE**

For more information about upcoming short-term trips, visit [wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/short-term-trips/](http://wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/short-term-trips/) or contact [vicro@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:vicro@wycliffe.org.au)



# Christ transforming culture: A safari adventure in Kenya

*In September 2023, Wycliffe Australia sent a team of nine people from Australia to Kenya to facilitate seven training events.*

The first three events were in far northern Kenya and mostly delivered in the Borana language. One major event was a Contextualisation Workshop, where Borana pastors and lay people studied their culture and worldviews in light of Scripture. Those involved in the workshop learned a new Bible story each day then went to local schools, where the stories were eagerly accepted by the children. At the same time, a different group of Boranas were learning *The Matthew Drama* script to help bring the words in the Bible to life. Over 900 Borana speakers (most not from a Christian background) attended the performances.



Team leader, Keith Benn, explains that the purpose of the trip was to provide training and support for African pastors and those involved in Bible translation, while also encouraging Aussies to consider how they can support the global church in Scripture engagement and Bible storytelling. As Keith says, 'An important goal for every church is making God's Word relevant for their people.'



Philemon was one of the Kenyan pastors who expressed gratitude for attending the workshops:

In our contextualisation class today, I learnt about the different rituals and the different festivals we do. I realised that, as Scripture depicts, Christ transforms culture – all culture. There is no culture that does not need transformation. Scripture says that God can transform them in a better way to ensure that God is the anchor of everything.



One of the Australian team members, Robert Love, was encouraged by the insights the Kenyan leaders shared during the workshops:

We've had a particularly fruitful and interesting time looking at traditional Mbeere beliefs and what the Bible says about them. In particular, we've been looking at how the Mbeere people believe that they go to sacrifice and make prayers to Gai (God) at special trees in order to get things that they want. Then we turn to the Bible, looking at some verses that help to throw some light on that particular belief. One passage in particular that has been helpful is Acts 17:24-25, 'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.'

# Bible storytelling bearing fruit

*In Nairobi, while team leader, Malcolm Barker, trained a second cast to perform The Matthew Drama, the rest of the Australian team were involved in a Story the Bible Teacher Training Seminar at the Africa International University.*

This was attended by Bible translators and 10 pastors from two different ethnic groups, who went home to teach the seminars in their own languages. Benson is one of the pastors who attended. He shares how the training is now bearing fruit in his village and beyond:



We had training here about Bible translation and how to use Bible storytelling in a very simple way. It has been of paramount importance to me and to the entire church.

I was informed about how to preach the Word and to tell a Bible story from a different perspective. So I thank those who have organised the Bible storytelling because it has been of great help to the church.



On Sunday, I started using the storytelling techniques in the church and the elders there were very much amazed and excited to see that their pastor has gone to another level [of understanding]. So I thank you, brothers and sisters from Australia, for bringing this teaching to us through brother Keith. May God bless you now very much. If time allows you, and the opportunity, you can have a time with us so that the gospel of Jesus Christ in our place may grow even deeper in our lives and the church.

**INFO**

For information about upcoming short-term trips, visit [wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/short-term-trips/](http://wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/short-term-trips/).



## SAVE THE DATE: Wycliffe Australia is turning 70!

Join us at the Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia National Centre on Saturday 5 October for our 70th anniversary celebrations!

Take a trip down memory lane with images and stories of God's faithfulness over the past 70 years. Enjoy a variety of food stalls, music, dancing and activities to celebrate the diversity of cultures, languages and communities we work alongside.

**MORE**

For more information, or to register for the event, go to [wycliffe.org.au/events/70th](http://wycliffe.org.au/events/70th) or call (03) 9712 2777

Visit [wbta.au/70th](http://wbta.au/70th)

Celebration of Bible Translation events are also running in multiple locations throughout Australia this year. Visit [wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/celebration-of-bible-translation/](http://wycliffe.org.au/eventtype/celebration-of-bible-translation/) for your nearest location.

# MAD:

## An eye-opening adventure

*Wycliffe Australia runs MAD (Ministry, Adventure and Discovery) short-term trips that provide an opportunity to visit Indigenous Australian communities where Bible translation, Scripture engagement and gospel work is taking place.*

David and Lyn Wake, along with Lyn and the late Chester Street, have been bringing teams in a bus from Melbourne to a number of locations throughout Northern and Central Australia since the MAD trips began in 1998. They are always amazed by what God does to bring the teams together and reflect his heart for Indigenous communities to understand his Word in the languages they understand best.



### FEEDBACK

This MAD trip was much like what I had heard from others who had done the trip before me. The first outcome for me was getting an in-depth understanding of the heart for reaching the Aboriginal communities with the good news of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the depth of relationship with fellow MADites, sharing with each other our journey of faith. I would certainly recommend this trip to others. –Johann

Many times I was out of my comfort zone. It was eye-opening entering the first Aboriginal community in the sort of environment that ordinarily I would not have entered. Team leader, David Wake, made contact with the local pastor and was sitting with him. I decided to reach out and join the gathering. What I discovered was a pastor with a real heart for his people and their welfare.

I discovered the challenges of getting appropriate health care in such an isolated community. We were able to pray for the people of the community and share our spiritual journeys. It was a wonderful experience that I am glad that I had the opportunity to be a part of. I would have totally missed what God had in store for me if I had not been able to go. – Andrew



A highlight for me was to visit parts of Australia where less than 0.001% of the population has ever been, such as Canteen Creek. I loved connecting with the people there. We live in pristine houses with manicured gardens, yet we don't know who our neighbours are or what our heritage is beyond a few generations. In stark contrast, Aboriginal communities are all about relationships. It was great to experience how Bible translation is helping people understand who God is and allowing his Spirit to effect change in hearts. The trip changed my perspective from a cerebral discussion about communities far away to a heart-warming experience and a deeper empathy for my fellow Australians. – Stewart

**The 2024 MAD trip is designed for Chinese speakers to learn more about Bible translation taking place in Indigenous Australian communities. It is planned for 23 September – 5 October 2024.**

**MORE**

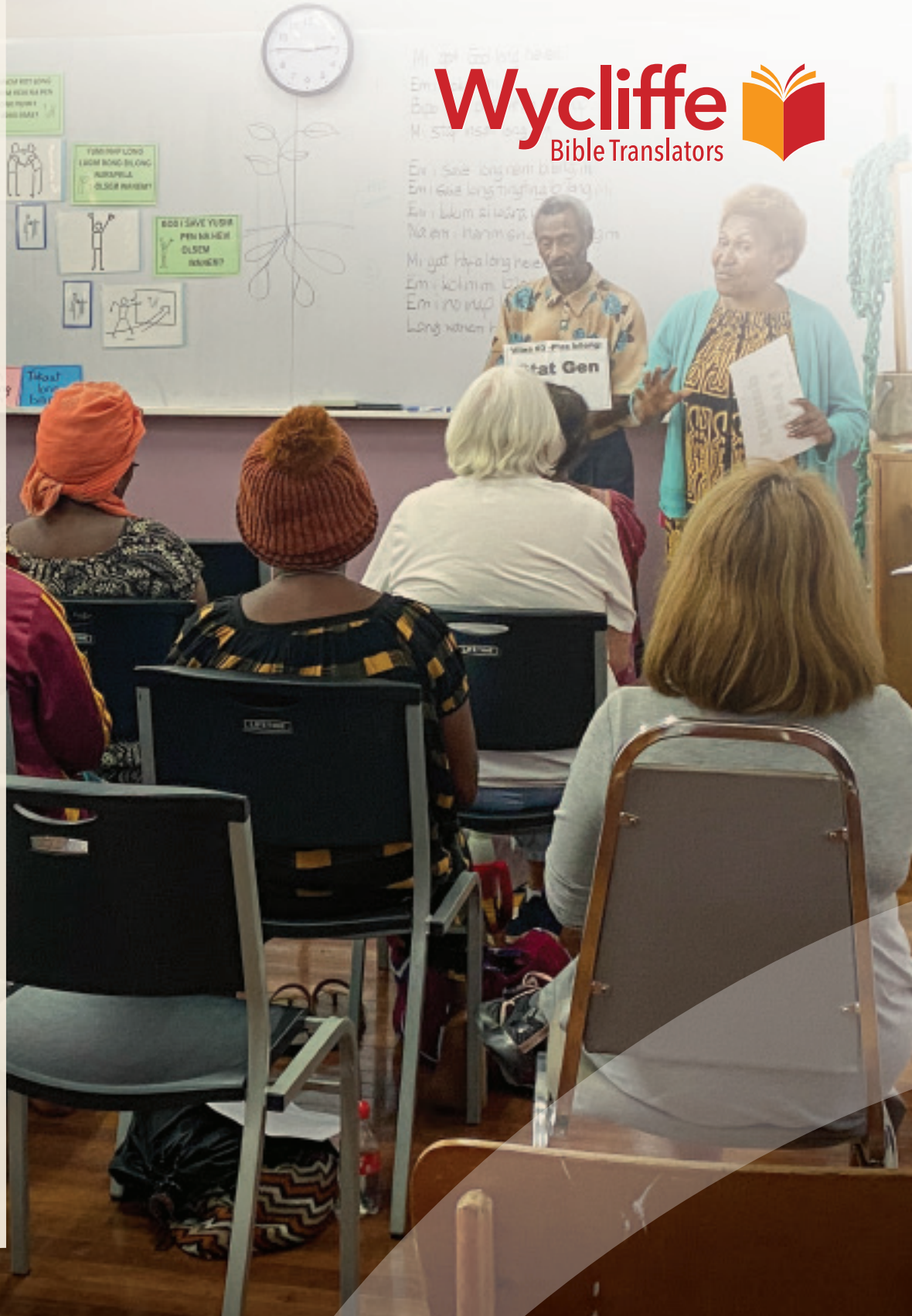
For more information, visit  
[wycliffe.org.au/events/go-mad-ch/](https://wycliffe.org.au/events/go-mad-ch/)  
For enquiries about 2025 MAD trips,  
please contact [wycliffe.org.au](https://wycliffe.org.au)



# Ministry Resourcing

AUTUMN 2024 / ISSN 2202-9818

**Wycliffe**  
Bible Translators 



## *What is Wycliffe Ministry Resourcing?*

Wycliffe Australia's Ministry Resourcing department seeks to support the work of our members and organisational partners on the field. We are committed to building strong relationships, with an emphasis on mutual respect, trust, collaboration and prayer. Our three main objectives are to:

- work closely with national Bible translation organisations under the Next Step Development initiative
- support strategic partnerships with SIL International
- support Australian members on the field with their project needs.

# Training for a sustainable future

The projects featured in this edition focus on providing greater training opportunities and support for local translators and support workers. Wycliffe Relief and Development is also pleased to announce a new partnership with Wycliffe Philippines that is designed to help marginalised communities learn how to work well together and generate sustainable sources of income.

by Greg Conwell, Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation CEO

## Training for African Consultants Project 8810



PHOTO BY SIL AFRICA

Bible translation projects rely on mother tongue (local) translators, and less on foreign translators, who are more likely to be involved as trainers, advisors and consultants. SIL International is aiming to train more local Africans to join Bible translation projects that are being done there. Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia is committed to helping to facilitate this by providing part-scholarships so that Consultants in Training (CITs) can attend training workshops.

One of the participants who attended a grammar workshop last year was excited to share the importance of the training:

With this strategy, there is every reason for us to hope for effective and credible translation in our communities.

**Target for 2024: A\$15,000**



For more information, head to [wycliffe.org.au/projects/training-african-cits/](https://wycliffe.org.au/projects/training-african-cits/)

### Next Step Development Projects

The mission of Next Step Development is to hear and understand what God has put on the hearts of our national colleagues, and through prayer to come alongside and support their vision and strategies for Bible translation. Next Step is currently working in close relationship with Wycliffe Global Alliance partners from PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines and two countries in South Asia.

To see more Next Step projects, go to [wycliffe.org.au/projects/](https://wycliffe.org.au/projects/)

### Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation Projects

Wycliffe Relief and Development Foundation is a separate company owned by Wycliffe Australia, which works through local partners to improve the practical aspects of life in marginalised communities. We aim to demonstrate Christian compassion and provide practical assistance in literacy and education, disaster relief, medical and basic health support. Donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

For WRDF projects, visit the WRDF website [wycliffefoundation.org.au](https://wycliffefoundation.org.au)

### Wycliffe Field Support Projects

Wycliffe Australia is committed to helping our field teams and the organisations they work with to thrive and serve effectively in their communities. Ministry Resourcing can help with providing funding for computers, village housing, travel costs, delivery of training, consultants and other services.

See more projects at [wycliffe.org.au/projects/](https://wycliffe.org.au/projects/)

# Scripture Material Distribution in remote Central Australia

Project 8534



PHOTOS BY GARY MCMASTER

There are many Indigenous Australian Christians living in remote communities who have a great thirst for the Word of God but very limited resources. These communities are often vast distances apart and spread across much of Central Australia. Your partnership with this project will assist with the significant costs involved in driving to remote communities to distribute Scripture materials, offer encouragement, and fellowship with Aboriginal Christians. We see this as a vitally important long-term mission.



A dedicated Christian couple with a heart for supporting Indigenous Christians living in remote areas has volunteered 6-8 months in 2024 to meet this need. Partnering with this project will support their travel expenses, including fuel, tyre replacement or repair and minor car repairs/service.

**Target for 2024: A\$13,333**

**MORE**

For more information, head to [wycliffe.org.au/projects/scripture-material-distribution-in-remote-central-australia/](https://wycliffe.org.au/projects/scripture-material-distribution-in-remote-central-australia/).

# Scripture Use North-East Papua New Guinea UPDATE

Project 8519



PHOTO BY WENDY AND FAJIAKI

Translating the Bible into the languages that need it is one thing but how do we help language communities engage with God's Word? The Scripture Use project is run through the Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea and aims to come alongside local churches, language communities, and translation teams to build enthusiasm for and capacity in engaging with the Bible.

Workshops held last year included a Bible overview, Culture Meets Scripture, Sunday School teacher training and Oral Story-based Trauma Healing. The Trauma Healing course left a particularly strong impact on participants as they discovered that God's Word contains wisdom for dealing with emotional and spiritual wounds. As one of the facilitators, Fajiki, shares:

Our Centre is surrounded by communities that have ongoing conflicts and issues and people have been coming into the Trauma Healing class in unexpected numbers. Participants from different walks of life attended the workshop. It was a week of tears and healing. God's Word taught in different lessons and key activities complemented each other and greatly impacted their lives. The very people who sat in class with heavy hearts on the first day, walked out healed and free on the final day.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the many training workshops that were made possible through this project. Your support enabled the purchase of training materials, accommodation and travel costs.

**MORE**

For more information about this project, head to [wycliffe.org.au/projects/scripture-use-north-east-papua-new-guinea/](https://wycliffe.org.au/projects/scripture-use-north-east-papua-new-guinea/).



# Community Growth Philippines

## Project 8853

WYCLIFFE  
RELIEF AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION  
PROJECT

This is a brand new project for WRDF. We have joined with Wycliffe Philippines as they plan to assist a community in Palawan province. This community is truly marginalised and suffers from a number of challenges. Householders have no reliable legal source of income but they do have local, natural products that they could develop for sale in nearby cities. Marriage of underage girls is also part of the culture, so education programs will help the community to understand the negative impact of this practice on the girls impacted and the community as a whole. Because of the location of the community in or around forest areas there is a lack of social cohesion, so the project will attempt to demonstrate ways of working together to improve financial and social security.

We are excited to be working with a new partner, Wycliffe Philippines, and encourage you to support this project from its inception.

**Target: A\$56,000 in the first year**

MORE

Visit [wycliffefoundation.org.au/](http://wycliffefoundation.org.au/)  
for more information.



IMAGES SUPPLIED BY WYCLIFFE PHILIPPINES

**Wycliffe**  
Bible Translators



If you would like to discuss any of the  
Ministry Resourcing projects, please contact:

**Kristen Hoglund:** [projects-admin@wycliffe.org.au](mailto:projects-admin@wycliffe.org.au)

**Greg Conwell:** [ceo@wycliffefoundation.org.au](mailto:ceo@wycliffefoundation.org.au)

Or call (03) 9712 2777