



Praise Points

Yolngu ladies Bible study that meets at our house each week with Jen.

The Fijian mission team providing teaching, worship and encouragement in the evenings over the Christmas period.

David's speedy and complete recovery from his fall and medivac to Darwin in mid-December.

Prayer Points

Yolngu will remain at the centre of decision-making about local services and facilities.

Timely recruitment of a new MAF Arnhem Land Program Manager, and wisdom for the interim managers, Gary and Doreen Toews from MAF HQ in Cairns.

MAF Engineer, John, has severe back pain and is awaiting an operation.

Our faithful dog, Potato, needs a home or a dog-sitter whilst we are away on furlough.



Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you again to you, our faithful supporters, who have sustained us through this year by your prayers, encouragement and financial support. We just couldn't be here without you. May God bless you.



As we went to press with our last newsletter we had just attended the opening and dedication of MAF's new hangar and engineering facility at Gove airport. This structure which took two years to complete also has two-storeys of office space and is conveniently located adjacent to the MAF passenger terminal. Funding took several years to secure and came from many sources but significant donations were received from MAF UK, MAF Netherlands and the Collier Foundation. Most of the labour was gifted by short-term workers who even paid for their own travel. The old hangar has been retained as a storage area.



MAF's long-term association with and commitment to the Yolngu was remembered by Banambi Wunungmurra, Chairman of the Uniting Church Yirrkala Parish and President of the East Arnhem Shire Council. He said. "A unity has developed between us. MAF has helped our people to move back out to their homelands, they work with us in a spirit of unity and I thank God for that. I really do."

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 1 Peter 4: 7-9 NIV

Also at this event, a photographic tribute to Hadleigh Smith was presented by his family and now sits proudly in the new staff lunch-room. The family visited Elcho Island a month later on the 16 October to mark the first anniversary of Hadleigh's death. The local community organised a memorial service and we were honoured by their love and appreciation of MAF, and they again acknowledged the sacrifices Hadleigh had made in choosing to live and work with them.



David recently flew Cessna 206 VH-SOP (above, heavily laden) back to Elcho from major maintenance at MAF's engineering facility at Mareeba in Queensland. The flight took 7 hours across two days and the route skirted around the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The following week David hit his face on the elevator of a GA8 Airvan and fell backwards heavily on to the concrete. He was airlifted to Darwin with a suspected upper spine injury but the x-rays proved nothing was broken. The wound on his nose is healing really well and he escaped with little more than whiplash. Thanks go to everyone who helped in picking up the pieces!



Graham and Jonathan are now enjoying their Christmas break and are looking after a number of extra dogs. This has become an annual event with most of the non-Yolngu workers departing on holiday at this time. They are looking forward to our UK furlough in March and April next year.

This year has ended with an unexpected twist which we trust will ultimately bring benefits to the Elcho community. One of our pilots has been working with our long-term partner, Marthakal Yolngu Airline, on a proposed scheduled air service in conjunction with an operator of larger aircraft. After several years of negotiation with the aviation regulator, MAF is also preparing to re-introduce a scheduled service between the major communities using our GA8 fleet, replacing the Cessna Caravan service discontinued in 2006.

MYA's management have now asked the MYA directors to choose between allowing MAF to continue renting an MYA house or reclaiming it to establish their own proposed air service. This situation is causing distress for both the directors and community who value the long-term relationship with MAF. MAF will respect their final decision but as it has no other suitable housing available, it could mean a reduction in MAF staff based on Elcho. We ask for your prayers for the directors as they wrestle with the implications of this choice and work through the division and pain it is causing.

Furlough 2010 in the UK

We leave Elcho for our UK furlough on 25 Feb. We hope to visit these churches on the following dates:

7 March

St Mary's Church
Dunsfold

14 March

St Faith's, Riverside &
St John's Newland
Kingston upon Hull

21 March

Capel Community Church
Capel St. Mary

28 March

St Michael's Church
Brantham

11 April

St Mark's Church
Kempshott

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