

The vision of Missions Interlink (MI) is for Australian churches to be actively engaged in effective cross-cultural and global mission for Christ’s glory. MI pursues this vision by connecting, assisting, resourcing, and representing MI Members and Associates of which there are currently 180 organisations made up of missions, colleges and a few, mostly large, churches. Most MI ministries and events are organised locally by the MI state branches and will be reported on at their separate Annual Meetings. Below is a report on some of the activities of the MI national office only.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

MI is committed to providing high quality training to maximise the effectiveness of cross-cultural mission. To this end the MI training programs are reviewed regularly and a comprehensive audit has been begun this year.

Transition Training

TT continues to provide greatly valued cross-cultural preparation for candidates from a number of member organisations and is offered twice yearly. Recent programs had 27 adult and 10 children participants (January 2015) and 27 adult and 14 children participants (July 2015). MI is indebted to the leadership and course development provided by the TT Co-ordinator, Kate Pocklington, and the facilitation provided by a team of gifted volunteers.



MILL (Maximum Impact Language Learning)

MILL programs assist participants prepare to learn another language, and are currently offered twice each year to CMS candidates and others. The standard of teaching for MILL provided by Cathy Bow and Rebecca Elliott is outstanding and feedback from participants is extremely positive.



MIST (Missions Interlink Short-term Training)

MIST programs have been offered across Australia 12 times over the last year. The MI state networks take responsibility for running these programs, while the national office is responsible for the curriculum, co-ordination. Programs in all states are being included in the current audit.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Working Effectively in Cultural Diversity

These valuable workshops held in Sydney and Melbourne and facilitated by Sheryl Silzer, helped equip participants to understand their own culture and connect with those from another culture in their team, church, or community.

Partnership Support Workshops

After the success of these workshops held last year, Myles Wilson returned to Australia in February this year and MI workshops were held in Sydney and Melbourne. A number of missions are now running these workshops to equip those seeking to develop a support team.



NATIONAL NETWORKS

Information and Communication Technology Network

The key activity of the MI ICT Network is to convene an Annual Conference. The next conference, *Pushing the Boundaries*, will be held in Cairns 26 – 29 October with keynote speaker, Antoine Wright.

Australian Missionary Trainers Network

Thanks go to Bruce Dipple who established the AMTN and co-ordinated it until the end of 2014. In this capacity Bruce edited and circulated regular newsletters for those involved in the training of missionaries. After a period of dormancy, Darrell Jackson (Morling College) has agreed to take on the role of co-ordinator.

MI NOT-FOR-PROFIT EVENTS

Round Table for Administrators and Business Managers

Fifteen staff of MI members attended this event to explore common issues, sharing of information, and how MI could assist.

Tax Deductibility for Missions?

This seminar was presented in Melbourne by Cathy Braun (Saward Dawson) and John Altman (Platform Legal), and will be presented by Anne Robinson (Prolegis Lawyers) in Sydney on Monday 26 October 2015.

Employment Law and Missions

Issues relating to employment both in Australia and overseas were the most common identified at the Round Table event. In response to this, a seminar on this topic has been arranged in Melbourne on 20 October 2015 and will be presented by Elisabeth Shalders and Adam Foster from Lewis Holdway Lawyers.

OTHER NATIONAL MI EVENTS

South Pacific Member Care Regional Conference



An extremely successful four day regional member care conference was hosted by Missions Interlink in Sydney last month. This event had been dreamt about for many years and took a full year in planning. It brought together almost 100 people from missions, churches, ministries and helping professions across Australia and New Zealand to network and learn together about Member Care.

ConNEXTions 2016

Planning has already begun for an MI National Conference next year. It will be held 19 – 21 July 2016 at Robert Menzies College in Sydney, with keynote speaker Eddie Arthur from Global Connections UK. Eddie's blog can be seen <http://www.kouya.net/>. Please save the date.

RESOURCES & INFORMATION

MI Website & Communications

A number of additional features have been added to the MI website over the last year and it is currently being redesigned so it is compatible with mobile devices and more user-friendly to ensure resources and information is easily accessible. A new feature in the log-in section will be a directory of helping professionals for missions to refer their personnel to. The directory is currently being populated.

MI email updates have also been revamped. A new regular national not-for-profit email has been introduced with information and news relevant to the governance, management and compliance of MI organisations. This means that the contents of the monthly *MI National Update* caters for the increasing number of individuals who are subscribed, by alerting them to mission news, events and resources.



Global Prayer Digest

The MI continues to provide subscriptions to the Global Prayer Digest. These are received and posted to approximately 80 subscribers on a bi-monthly basis.

Church Resources

A series of MI Guides for Local Churches on various aspects of global mission is being developed. The first ten of these covering topics such as *Forming a Church Mission Committee*, *Writing a Global Mission Policy*,



Discipling Adults to be Global Christians, *Discipling Children to be Global Christians*, *Caring for Missionaries*, and *Setting a Missions Budget*.

The first eleven of these will be available soon both as a web-pages (with direct links to other on-line resources) and as downloadable PDFs.

Mission Opportunities

A decision was made by the MI National Leadership Team to take on (for a 1 year trial from 1 July 2015) the administration of the Mission Matching Service previously provided by *Second Wind Network*. This facility enables those seeking to serve in global mission to find, or be matched to, mission opportunities. The name of this facility will be changed to *Mission Seek* with the release of the re-designed MI website.

Research

Missions Interlink represents the Australian mission community to the National Church and Lifestyle Survey in the development and analysis of information about church engagement in global mission. Four fact sheets based on data from the 2011 NCLS *Operations Survey* were finalised and released this year. The titles of these were: *Developing Countries Support*, *Overseas Workers Support*, *Mission Trips Organised by Churches*, *Church Attendees on Overseas Mission Trips*. The questions will be repeated in the NCLS surveys next year.

MI STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

Compliance Project

The MI Member Accreditation Standards were reviewed and upgraded last year, and sample policy documents and other resources provided. Individual compliance assistance and advice has been given to some, mostly smaller, Member organisations. The ACNC register has been monitored for Member information, reporting and documents, and more comprehensive Member compliance reviews will commence in the coming year.



DEALING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Income Tax Exemptions

It is now four years since the Australian Government first announced changes to the "in Australia Special Conditions for Income Tax Exemptions and, after a number of versions of these changes during that period, they have now been dropped. This means that Missions Interlink Accredited Members continue to meet the "In Australia" test for Income Tax Exemption as they are prescribed by law under Section 50.50 (d) of the Income Tax Regulations.

The personnel of MI Accredited Members continue to be able to declare their overseas income as "exempt foreign income" for tax purposes if they are considered Australian residents for income tax purposes.

Government Benefits and Services

Government benefits and services available to Australians temporarily residing outside Australia are diminishing and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain special concessions and arrangements on the basis of providing Christian ministries overseas. The contribution of Ron Clough as the MI Liaison Officer for many years has been significant and is noted with great appreciation. MI will continue to advocate on behalf of its members and their personnel and to provide accurate information where possible.

DISCOUNTS AND COMMISSIONS

EA Missioncare

MI values its partnership with EA Insurance to provide significant discounts on long-term travel insurance for the personnel of MI Members and Associates. A commission of \$15 per policy has been provided to MI for short-term travel insurance.

MI Corporate Travel Insurance

EA Insurance has recently been able to negotiate a group corporate travel insurance arrangement for MI Members and Associates. *MI Corporate Travel Insurance* will commence on 30 November and be available only to MI Members and Associates and include national and international travel for individuals and groups of up to 10 people.

International Transfers

A significant commission is paid to MI by *Western Union Business Solutions* for international transfers made by Members and Associates. A new arrangement that provides both user discount and a commission to MI has been made this year with *Compass Global Markets*.

WEA MISSION COMMISSION

Missions Interlink is affiliated globally with the Mission Commission (MC) of the WEA. This provides regular opportunities to network, develop friendships, and share ideas and resources globally. I currently contribute to this group as a member of the Executive Committee of the MC Global Leadership Team and the selection committee for the MC's next CEO to be appointed next year. I was privileged to attend a Global Round Table hosted by the MC in Pretoria in August 2015.



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

MI has an outstanding team of staff and volunteers across Australia. My thanks go to all who contribute to the ministry of MI.

Pam Thyer
National Director
October 2015