

Celebrating 50 years

This year, Oxfam Community Aid Abroad celebrates 50 years of working in partnership with communities around the world to overcome poverty and injustice. Let's take a step back and review key milestones in our history.

1953

Father Gerard Kennedy Tucker, an Anglican clergyman with a passion for social justice who had founded the Melbourne-based welfare and advocacy organisation the Brotherhood of St Laurence, becomes increasingly concerned about rising poverty in Asia. He begins to speak about the problem at church meetings and rallies. A pensioner who hears Tucker is so moved that he donates some funds and thereafter, weekly collections are sent to a hospital in India.

1954

Responding to Fr. Tucker's message, Muriel Bennett, Jean Mckenzie, Bess Pitman and others establish the first local Food for Peace Campaign group in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn.

1962

David Scott, a journalist and Tucker's nephew, is appointed first full-time Director of the Food for Peace Campaign. The name is changed to Community Aid Abroad (CAA) to reflect our mission of assisting communities rather than just providing food.

1964

The 1960s sees rapid growth for CAA. 160 CAA groups are established around Australia and fundraising reaches new levels.

1965

An abiding challenge for developing countries is the need for greater trade and export opportunities. In 1965 CAA establishes Trade Action Pty Ltd, selling goods handmade by our project partners. By 1978 it is operating 22 stores nationally. Profits subsidise CAA's administration costs. Trade Action performs profitably until 1976, makes losses thereafter and is sold in 1979.

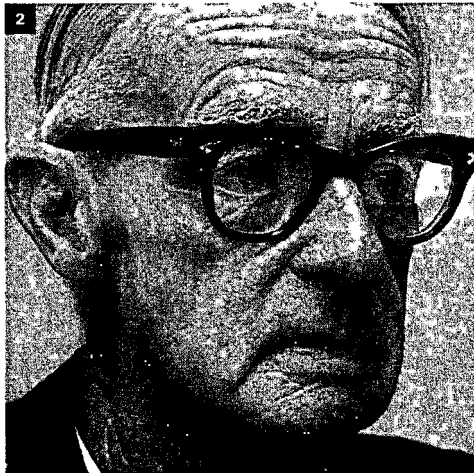
1966

Groups of Australian supporters first visit CAA projects on study tours to India in 1966. The trips provide supporters with first-hand experience of the communities we work with. In 2002, Oxfam Community Aid Abroad Tours to Asia are consolidated as a sub-brand of Intrepid Travel called Oxfam Journeys. Tours to Aboriginal Australia and Cuba are now run by a voluntary, not for profit group called the Oxfam Community Aid Abroad Travel Group.

1967

The first Walk against Want is held. Since its inception the event has raised over 10 million dollars for long term development programs.

By the mid 1960s, we extend our activities to include advocacy through lobbying and community education about development. We campaign for an increase in Australian Government aid, and allocate some of our income to educational activities.



1 Bus serves as a mobile billboard, 1986.

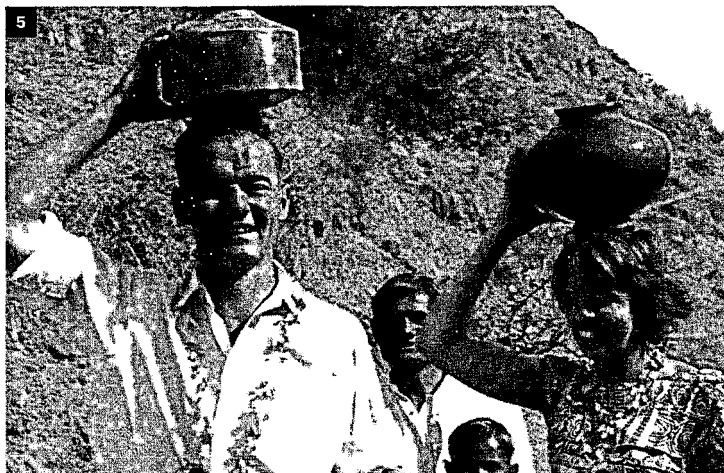
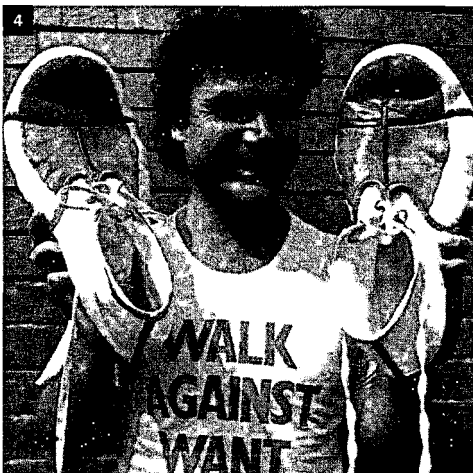
2 Father Tucker, 1953.

3 Study tour in India, 1966.

4 Daryl Somers at the Walk Against Want, 1980s.

5 David Scott, 1962.

6 Trade Action sells goods handmade by our project partners, 1965.



to become the Australian affiliate of the Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) International network in 1972.

1975

We decide to fund Aboriginal projects researching the impact of colonial development on Indigenous Australian society. The decision, not initially widely accepted, helps staff and supporters to appreciate problems of underdevelopment within Australia.

MID/LATE 1970s

We begin supporting development programs in Pacific countries Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Kanaky (New Caledonia), Fiji, Western Samoa and French Polynesia. We also begin community education and advocacy on issues of broad concern to the region, including support for movements for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific and against large scale, uncontrolled logging and mining.

1980s

We have worked in Mexico and Central America since the mid 1980s. Now we are supporting programs in Guatemala and Mexico on the rights of the region's Indigenous Peoples.

The Third World War begins: a program of talks promoting understanding of the issues confronting people of developing countries and how Australians contribute to inequality in consumption of the world's shared resources.

- 7 CAA's first Aboriginal project, 1975.
- 8 CAA participates in a peace march, 1986.
- 9 Community Aid Abroad Trading, 1986.
- 10 Don Dunstan, 1991.
- 11 Public Policy Unit formed in 1991.
- 12 Nike Campaign, 1995.

1983

We establish Community Aid Abroad Development Services, an organisation whose vision is that capacity-building will best expand the resources available to poor communities. This also enables CAA to 'structure involvement with Government without damaging the voluntary nature of the organisation'. In May 1987, the name changes to International Development Support Services (IDSS).

1984

Although the main focus of our work to date has been in Asia, the devastating 1984 famine in Ethiopia leads to CAA making a major new investment in programs in the Horn of Africa. Our first water drilling rig, destined for the people of Tigray, is seized by the Ethiopian Government for military purposes. Today we work in many countries in Africa providing humanitarian relief and long term development programs, including a major focus on HIV/AIDS in southern Africa.

LATE 1980s

We've had an emergencies response capacity since the 1960s for countries affected by conflict or natural disasters. However it isn't until the late 1980s that our Emergencies Unit is established to enable us to best plan and deliver disaster relief.

1986

After the sale of Trade Action Pty Ltd, CAA's trade in handicrafts continues through local groups. In 1986 these ventures are brought under one umbrella: Community Aid Abroad Trading Pty Ltd (now Oxfam Australia Trading Pty Ltd) a wholly owned subsidiary of OCAA. In 2003 it includes 17 shops, internet and mail order and a travel agency: Our World Travel.

1988

In the year of Australia's bicentennial, the Long March builds awareness of the real impact of colonisation by bringing Indigenous Australians from all over the country to Sydney. We support the protest by funding travel for participants. The Long March fosters a renewed sense of unity among Indigenous Australians.

1991

With an income of more than \$12 million, by 1991 Community Aid Abroad is now a medium-sized Australian development organisation. The following year we grow substantially by merging with Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign. Chair of the Freedom from Hunger board, Don Dunstan becomes CAA National Chair and remains so throughout the transition period until 1993.

1991

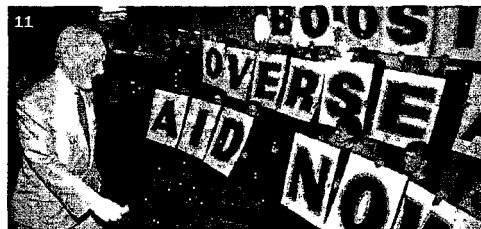
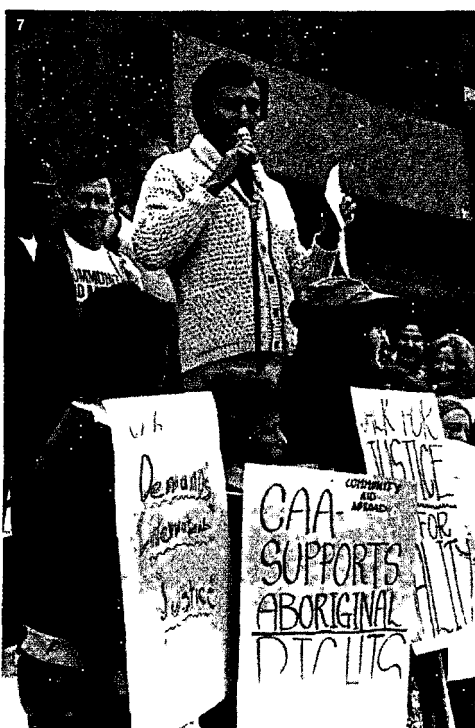
The Public Policy Unit is formed to strengthen the agency's advocacy - addressing the root causes of poverty.

1995

The Nike Campaign is started by trade action groups in Perth and Sydney. In 2003 there are 2,000 active members, and the Nike pages the most frequented part of our website.

1995

The Community Leadership Program begins in partnership with the University of Queensland. It builds commitment from supporters in Australia to become part of a global movement for social justice by using community development strategies to enable its members to become effective catalysts for change.



1997

Taste of the Nation is introduced. A food and wine, fundraiser, it is successful but the high cost of operation leads to it being discontinued in 2001.

In protest against the policies of One Nation, over 12,000 Australians participate in our Face Up To Racism campaign by sending in a signed photograph of themselves. The campaign receives unprecedented media coverage and produces the largest photo petition ever seen in Australia. The petition is presented to the Governor General, Sir William Deane and tours South East Asia.

1999

A week after East Timor votes for independence, a wave of violence is unleashed. An entire people become refugees. By December we have raised over one million dollars for our emergency appeal. For the first time we are the lead Oxfam agency in an international emergency.

Originally a military training exercise run by the Queen's Gurkha Signals Regiment in Hong Kong, 1999 sees the first Australian Oxfam Trailwalker in Sydney and Adelaide. It raises over \$250,000. Four years later the event is also run in Melbourne and is nationally raising \$1 million.

The process of integrating the work of the Oxfam International affiliates takes a significant step with the inaugural meeting in Melbourne of all its Executive Directors. Judy Henderson, previously Chair of Community Aid Abroad is appointed Chair. The formation improves Oxfam International's global perspective on emergencies, advocacy and strategic planning.

2000

We hold the first International Youth Parliament (IYP) in Sydney. By 2003 IYP will become a global network of young activists in over 150 countries building a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable world dedicated to developing the project and advocacy skills of its youth network. A second IYP will be held in Sydney in 2004.

In the absence of commitment by the Australian mining industry to establish an enforceable code of conduct or a complaints mechanism for mine-affected communities in poor countries, CAA establishes a Mining Ombudsman to investigate and act upon complaints against Australian mining companies.

A process of 'harmonisation' with Oxfam International begins. The name of the organisation changes to Community Aid Abroad - Oxfam Australia. The Oxfam logo (affectionately known as Kenny) is developed and adopted by 12 Oxfams around the world.

2001

We change our name to Oxfam Community Aid Abroad. After a major review of the organisation, it is decided with great sadness that it is necessary to close the Tasmania and ACT offices and reorganise state offices to better service our one program advocacy approach.

Our Executive Director of 9 years, Jeremy Hobbs, is appointed Executive Director of Oxfam International.

2002

A new direction for the agency begins. We increase the depth of our one program advocacy approach to development and narrow our geographic focus from seven regions to five: East Asia, South Asia, Southern Africa, Oceania and Indigenous Australia. We continue to focus on gender equity, HIV/AIDS and Indigenous Peoples and participate in the Oxfam International Fair Trade campaign.

2003

The organisation now raises more than \$25 million annually and has more than 250 staff working in 33 countries. We rely heavily on the support of non-paid workers whose volunteer time contributes more than half a million dollars of human resources to achieving our mission.

Funds are now raised by a variety of means, through our pledge program **aware**, our website, emergency appeals and direct mail, and events including Walk Against Want, Trailwalker and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala.

Chairs of National Executive

1962 - 69 G. K. Tucker
1970 - 80 David Scott
1981 - 82 John Birch
1983 - 87 Brian Hobbs
1988 - 89 Helen Gow
1990 - 92 Judy Henderson
1993 Don Dunstan
1994 - 1996 Judy Henderson
1997 - 2002 Jo-Anne Everingham
2002 Judy Mitchell

National Directors

1962 - 70 David Scott
1970 - 75 Jim Webb
1975 - 79 Adrian Harris
1979 - 85 Harry Martin
1985 - 87 Michael Henry

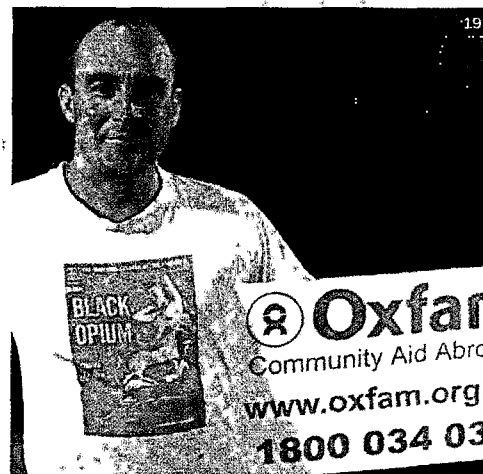
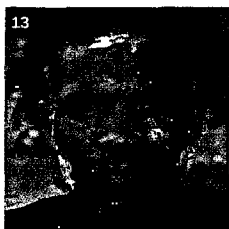
Chief Executive Officer

1987 - 92 David Armstrong

Executive Directors

1992 - 2001 Jeremy Hobbs
2001 - Andrew Hewett

13 East Timor, 1999. 14 Taste of the Nation, 1997. 15 Petition as part of the Face Up to Racism campaign is presented to Governor General Sir William Deane, 1997. 16 Jeremy Hobbs, 2001. 17 Mining campaigning, 2000. 18 Make Trade Fair, 2002. 19 Jimmie at the 2003 Comedy Gala.



What are human rights?

**By Chris Sidoti, National Spokesperson
for the Human Rights Council of Australia**



Photo courtesy of
HREOC website

The idea of human rights is not new. Most religions and philosophies contain ideas that support current concepts of human rights.

Some people see human rights in religious terms, others see them as secular (non-religious) in origin. What is new, or at least only half a century old, is that human rights are now internationally agreed and endorsed as law. Because they are law, they are expressed in legal terms. But there is nothing magical about human rights. They are no more and no less than a lawyer's way of describing what it means to be human and what a human being requires to live a fully human life. They are as simple as that.

WHERE RIGHTS COME FROM

Human rights are described formally in international treaties and declarations. Less formally, we can observe human rights in the standards of behaviour expected of people by their cultures, religions and shared values. Nevertheless, there is often heated discussion and disagreement about human rights and about how they should be interpreted in specific situations.

Human rights come from and describe our status as human beings living in society. A human right is a special kind of strong claim made on society by an individual or a group.

When ethics are used to justify human rights, they are sometimes called moral rights. When they are written into national law, they are called legal rights. Human rights are usually seen as having an international dimension.

HOW TO RECOGNISE A RIGHT

Human rights include civil and political rights (such as freedom of speech and freedom from torture), as well as economic and social rights (such as the rights to health and education).

Not every claim on society by an individual or a group is a human right. Human rights are more than mere demands, they have some special characteristics. Human rights are:

Inherent: people have human rights because they are human beings.

Universal: they apply to all people, regardless of status, race, gender or other distinction. Equality is one of the basic ideas in human rights.

Inalienable: they cannot be taken away, given up, exchanged or sold.

Indivisible: all people are entitled to all rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

Interdependent: people's enjoyment of one human right is affected by their enjoyment of all others; civil and political rights enable the better enjoyment of economic and social rights; economic and social rights enable the better enjoyment of civil and political rights.

Some rights apply to individuals, such as the right to a fair trial. These are called individual rights. Others rights apply to groups of people, such as the rights of cultural and religious minorities, and the rights to development and self-determination. These are called collective rights.

THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Charter of the United Nations is the single most important international treaty. It contains specific provisions placing human rights at the centre of the UN's work. Among the purposes of the UN set out in Article One of the Charter is:

"... promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION

After its establishment in 1945, the UN moved quickly on human rights, and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948. The Universal Declaration is not a treaty but its provisions have great authority. It proclaims the human rights of all people, including children. Article One declares:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ..."

Article Two declares:

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status ..."

The Universal Declaration outlines rights to:

- equality and freedom from discrimination
- life, liberty and personal security
- freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- equality before the law
- a fair trial
- privacy
- freedom of belief and religion
- freedom of opinion
- freedom of peaceful assembly and association; the right to participate in government
- social security
- work
- an adequate standards of living
- education.

The Universal Declaration is the cornerstone of human rights. It is used around the world by people working to protect and promote human rights. It is officially supported by all countries, including Australia. It forms the basis of later human rights treaties.

The Human Rights Council of Australia was established in 1978 as a private non-government organisation promoting understanding of and respect for human rights. It links the Australian human rights movement with human rights activists in other parts of the world. The Council is affiliated with the International League of Human Rights and has Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

“ A human right is a special kind of strong claim made on society by an individual or a group. ”