



From the National Director

"Give a little HOPE this Christmas" is the motif of this year's Christmas Bowl, resonating with the uncertain mood of our times.

The Christmas Bowl, since 1949, has remained a vibrant and proven symbol of Australian ecumenism. It is Australian churches enabling our partner churches and communities to act together in the face of shared difficulties, and provide a common witness to Christ amidst their people.

The Christmas Bowl is based on a relationship of partnership grounded in Christian fellowship (*koinonia*). In a way, the nature of Christmas Bowl partnerships is no different from other partnerships we may be familiar with – where care for each other, and going the extra mile are so crucial.

Christmas Bowl mutuality means that we accept that we are also enriched as we give. It implies solidarity – standing in the shoes of those we support, and feeling their pain, their sense of hopelessness, their anger, and doing all we can for them. It means sharing: we share our lives, our stories, our gifts. Our material contribution, then, takes on a whole new meaning. It affirms the dignity of each other.

It will be November by the time you receive this issue of *In Focus*, when Christmas, and the Christmas Bowl, will be upon us. Please contact us for the very attractive Kit for use in your church/group.

I thank you for your support and encouragement throughout the year.

Caesar D'Mello
National Director, Christian World Service/NCCA

Lasting meaningful Pacific relationships through the Christmas Bowl

Emele Duituturaga, a development specialist, consultant and trainer with a background as a social scientist and social economist will be a Christmas Bowl visitor in November and December.

Emele is Chair of the Social Empowerment Education Program of the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy in Fiji, which has been supported with funds from the Christmas Bowl this year.

She has recently facilitated a Training Program for Solomon Island leaders in association with the Australian Council for Overseas Aid. Emele feels that the short-term achievements of the Australian Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands will only be sustainable if assistance is provided

The Social Empowerment Education Program ... has been supported with funds from the Christmas Bowl this year.

to the government and people of the Solomon Islands to address the underlying causes of the crisis, particularly through a long-term process of deep engagement with Solomon Islands civil society.

Contact State Ecumenical staff for details of Emele's programs in New South Wales (15-18 November), Tasmania (19-24 November), South Australia (25-30 November) and Queensland (1-5 December).

Colleen Hodge, Education and Communications Program



Mark Hobson, CWS's Pacific Program Officer with Emele

Give a little Hope this Christmas

As we look ahead to Christmas, let us factor in our giving the pressures of inflation and the growing need faced by our sisters and brothers in Christ. The 2003 Christmas Bowl needs an increase! CWS/NCCA urges churches and other groups to act on these simple suggestions in the spirit of sharing we are blessed with at Christmas. Every extra effort translates into a bit more of hope and life for our partners.

- Invite your members to increase their gift to the Christmas Bowl this year by raising their last year's giving by at least \$5 or 5% (if greater). Those who can contribute more are strongly encouraged to do so.
- Urge those who did not give last year to give at least \$5 this year.
- Urge members to each take an envelope and request a friend to give to the Christmas Bowl.
- Set a Christmas Bowl target for your congregation or group at 20% higher than last year's giving. Please aim for a higher target if the spirit so moves you.