



FLYING FOR LIFE

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF MAF IN AUSTRALIA



Work today
that serves
tomorrow

Spring Edition 2025

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Mission Aviation

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

– EPHESIANS 2:10 ESV



Children gather around the MAF aircraft on the ground in Marolambo, Madagascar.

Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to *Flying for Life* Spring 2025 – the very first edition of our global MAF magazine!

After years of producing individual magazines across 12 countries, this unified publication of common content marks an exciting step forward in collaboration across the MAF world. I pray you find it inspiring, and I'd love to hear your feedback as we seek to work together effectively.

Our theme, *Work today that serves tomorrow*, is timely. As we celebrate 80 years of MAF's ministry, we reflect with gratitude on God's faithfulness and look ahead with purpose.

"The work we do today is an investment in the lives of those who will follow."

That's why we're excited to share a new initiative equipping local leaders – empowering men and women in MAF-supported countries – with the training and support they need to serve their communities with lasting impact. You can read more in these pages.

It's already been a remarkable year for MAF. In May, we gathered at the Church of St Andrew in Canberra with alumni, supporters, and representatives from many of the countries and partner organisations we serve, to thank God for eight decades of His provision for our ministry.

Another highlight was our east coast plane tour, showcasing MAF's newest Cessna 208 Caravan, P2-AFD, en route to Papua New Guinea. We served alongside volunteers and colleagues from MAF International and MAF PNG, welcoming both current and future supporters to step on board. Many were moved by the interactive flight experience – a chance to see how a 24-hour trek on foot can become a 5-minute flight in a plane.

As you explore this edition, please keep MAF in your prayers – that we would serve with wisdom, unity and vision for the generations to come. Thank you for your partnership,



Chris Barnes
CEO, MAF in Australia

GLOBAL IMPACT

80 Years Young

How does an 80-year-old become more active, relevant and innovative in a changing world? That's the question Mission Aviation Fellowship is asking as it celebrates a significant anniversary, while looking to the future.

MAF was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War by pioneers determined to use aviation to bring help, hope and healing to isolated communities.

MAF International's Chief Transformation and Operating Officer Norman Baker said the bold journeys of those early MAF pioneers (such as Betty Greene's flights in Mexico and South America or Stuart King and Jack Hemmings' trips across Africa) had set an example for the organisation to follow as it looks ahead.

"The world is changing around us and it's changing at a pace that we've never seen before,"

he said. "We serve roughly 2,500 isolated communities and one of the things we want to do, as we approach our 100-year anniversary, is ask, *how do we become more effective?*"

"Our ambition is to double that impact and reach double the number of isolated communities."

With an estimated one billion people across the world suffering because they live far from decent healthcare or education, the challenge for MAF is to better understand the needs of the next generation.

"You go back 80 years and the motivation of love, to want to improve people's lives is admirable," he said. "That's still at the core of who we are, but our understanding of what communities actually need has to keep changing. I think MAF benefits as we bring more people into that circle who live in that context and understand that context."

Expanding recruitment possibilities

The generosity of our wonderful donors supports opportunities for pilots, engineers, managers and other key staff to make a difference in the nations where MAF operates.

“We believe that God is calling the African Church to rise up in this generation, not only to reach its own communities, but also to send missionaries, engineers, pilots and leaders to places that are still waiting for the hope of Christ.”

 **SUSAN KIGEN-KOLUM,**
COUNTRY DIRECTOR, MAF KENYA

MAF is increasingly recruiting people from Africa and Asia who bring their skills and new perspectives.

Susan Kigen-Kolum was an engineer in MAF’s Kenya program, but now, as Country Director, she is leading the efforts to attract skills from the East Africa region.

“There is a growing excitement and a shared sentiment that the time has come for Africa to rise. For too long, many Africans have been recipients of missions and missionaries, but now it is time for Africa to give back,” she said.

“Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africans under the age of 30. As the most

rapidly growing continent, Africa’s demographic, economic and cultural growth will undoubtedly influence the global system.

“We believe that God is calling the African Church to rise up in this generation, not only to reach its own communities, but also to send missionaries, engineers, pilots and leaders to places that are still waiting for the hope of Christ.”

New technologies

So, decades on from those initial MAF flights, it is encouraging to see how the MAF family is growing. For MAF leaders like Norm and Susan, people are the key, but technology has a part to play too.



Norm Baker (left) in the MAF cockpit with pilot Mathias Glass.

Although aviation is a lifeline for isolated communities, MAF is also looking to embrace technologies that are better for our planet. This means that MAF’s next generation could involve drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), fuel-efficient technology and a sophisticated simulator that significantly reduces the hours spent in the air during training.

“We’re evaluating new technology that’s emerging. We are looking at when they start to become viable products that we think we could put into use,” said Norm.

The vision of MAF’s founders is still clear 80 years later – MAF flies where others don’t. In the years ahead, it’s your support that enables MAF to fill a gap that changes lives and saves lives.

Norm added: “If an airline could start up in one of these isolated situations and difficult environments that we operate in, they would do it and we would celebrate it, but they don’t because they can’t afford that in their commercial models. That’s why we are more effective, and together we can make a difference.”



MAF in Kenya celebrated Terry and Micheni Ruriani after they were commissioned by the church as missionaries.

Story by Sean Atkins.

Protecting the reefs of Timor-Leste together

On Atauro Island, local fishermen are reviving traditional wisdom to care for the sea that sustains them. With help from conservation organisation Blue Ventures, and vital flights from MAF, communities are working together to protect Timor-Leste's fragile marine ecosystems for future generations.

Antonio Pereira has been fishing since he was 11 years old. He lives on Atauro Island in Timor-Leste and, like many in his community, he relies on the ocean for an income to support his family.

"The fish I catch are prepared for meals and some are sold to earn money to support my children's education" he says.

However, in recent years there has been a decline in fish stocks. This is because the marine ecosystem has been harmed by overfishing and the use of tools that destroy the coral reefs, which

are home to the fish on which the community relies. Antonio explains:

"Fishing is now very difficult, because there are fewer fish compared to the past."

Over half of the world's coral reefs have been lost since 1950. These vital ecosystems not only provide food and income for coastal communities, they also protect coastlines and play a crucial role in mitigating climate change.

Supporting communities

Timor-Leste is home to some of the most diverse coral reefs on earth and the local people are taking action to preserve them.

Communities are resurrecting a traditional Timorese land and sea management concept known as Tara Bandu. This system aims to conserve natural resources and ensure their sustainable use for the future. With the assistance of the conservation organisation Blue Ventures, Antonio's village has implemented the system to establish Marine Protected Areas.

Antonio says: "I went to Beloi, our neighbouring village located on the eastern part of Atauro Island, for two weeks, where we observed the results of fishing Tara Bandu, showing that the fish were very abundant."

Blue Ventures is assisting communities to protect their marine species, particularly fish and coral reefs, whilst helping them find new ways to sustain their means of living. For Antonio, this has meant shifting to seaweed harvesting.



Antonio Pereira, a local fisherman on Atauro Island.



Atauro Island.



“We’re able to help increase that impact by directly providing a means of transport for NGOs, both for their staff and for any supplies they may need.”

 JOE FARREN, MAF PILOT

Flying for conservation

MAF has been instrumental in supporting these conservation efforts. Flights from the capital, Dili, to Atauro Island, allow Blue Ventures to access remote areas, especially during the wet season when boat travel is difficult.

Blue Ventures’ Program Officer, Armindo Marques, explains “MAF planes truly help us a lot... we are grateful for their commitment to

supporting us by providing flights during urgent times.”

MAF pilot Joe Farren shared his appreciation for the work of Blue Ventures in supporting the people of Atauro Island: “It’s awesome how we get to partner with NGOs here and enable them to have a greater impact, by directly providing a means of transport, both for their staff and for any supplies they may need.”

MAF’s partnership with Blue Ventures enables local expertise and international support to come together to protect Timor-Leste’s marine treasures and ensure their sustainability for future generations.

*Story and photos by Lobitos Alves.
Edited by Vivienne Pattison.*



EDUCATION

SOUTH SUDAN

A brighter future for refugee children

More than a million refugees from war-torn South Sudan have sought safety in northern Uganda, including many children growing up in uncertainty. But at Peace Nursery and Primary School in Olua, run by MAF's partner, PEACE International, hope is growing, and children are completing their education.

The schoolyard at Peace Nursery and Primary School is teeming with life. Laughter is loud, and children in tidy school uniforms run between each other.

Here we meet Achol Bol Mabior, mother of 15-year-old school graduate Akech. Achol fled South Sudan with her children when the war became too dangerous. For both her and Akech, the chance for him to attend school feels

almost like a dream come true. "I want my children to get an education – because I never had that chance! I hope they can study and support their siblings," she says.

"I used to do a lot of work, but now I have less strength, and I can only see with one eye. I want to start sewing clothes and save a little every day, so that this boy can go back to school."

And the young graduate, standing next to his mother, knows that education will be the key to a brighter future.

"I want to become an engineer. When I see people working with electricity, I admire them and I feel like I want to be like them," he says. "When I study, I'll be in a position to help my family. I want to build a house for my mother and help her raise my other siblings."



—
“Education is the key to shaping the lives of refugees.”



**ROSEMARY KHAMATI,
 FOUNDER OF PEACE
 INTERNATIONAL**



The key to peace

The civil war in South Sudan broke out in December 2013, just two years after the country’s independence. The conflict quickly developed into a brutal war marked by ethnic violence, leading to a major humanitarian crisis. Thousands of families fled to neighbouring Uganda, and many children grew up without access to even basic education.

PEACE International responded to this urgent need. Their mission is to promote peace by offering hope through education, leadership training and support for women. Today, the school they run provides education, trauma care, and two daily meals to more than 850 students, from nursery to 7th grade.

“Education is the key to shaping the lives of refugees,” says Rosemary Khamati, the founder of PEACE International, who was flown in for the graduation ceremony.

“They [refugees] will sit around the table and discuss issues instead of engaging in physical wars. Education is a change agent and an agent of peace,

as we pursue a Christ-centred education for the students.”

Flying for the future

MAF has been an important partner for PEACE International for several years – including flying more than 1,000 Bibles and school supplies to students and leaders. In addition, MAF has transported partners to provide trauma care and peacebuilding training for teachers, women and pastors.

Ruth Jack, MAF’s Country Director in Uganda, described what refugee camps mean to her: “There, you find the best and worst of humanity coming together. People who have lost hope are served by those who give their lives to bring hope,” she says.

“Our partners have expressed how important our flights are to them, because they make their work a lot easier and more efficient.”

—
*Story by Annet Nabbanja.
 Edited by Odd Arild Nessa.
 Photos by Annet Nabbanja and
 Rosemary Khamati.*



"Today, MAF serves around **2,500 isolated communities**, but as we approach 100 years, we're dreaming bigger. With God's help, we're aiming to double our impact, and bring hope to twice as many people in need."



NORM BAKER,
CHIEF TRANSFORMATION AND
OPERATING OFFICER,
MAF INTERNATIONAL



Give thanks to God, for lives impacted through the work of MAF across the world over the last 80 years.

Pray for MAF staff and families serving in isolated locations, that they would know His daily presence and protection.



Pray that MAF's work today will lay a strong foundation for lasting impact tomorrow – to reach even more isolated people with help, hope and healing.





**"One generation commends
your works to another; they
tell of your mighty acts."**

— PSALM 145:4 NIV



Pray for God's continued guidance, and for wisdom and unity, as leaders make decisions that will shape the next decades of ministry.

Ask God to raise up new supporters, staff and prayer partners for the years ahead.



A lifeline for young lives

Around the world, young lives hang in the balance every day due to medical emergencies, lack of access to hospitals, or the absence of specialist care in remote communities. The stories of three young patients – Neema, Yelikha and Angeline – show how MAF is helping bridge the gap, to bring healing to the next generation.



Yelikha (left) is smiling again with her mother, Aissatou.

📍 GUINEA

Yelikha's Story

A decade without a smile in Guinea

Thousands of kilometres away in Guinea, 15-year-old Yelikha endured a different kind of long-term suffering. A traffic accident at age five had left her jaw locked shut, unable to open her mouth or eat normally. For ten years, her mother Aissatou searched for answers.

"We have really visited many hospitals," Aissatou said. "The previous doctors had told us that we had to evacuate my daughter to Morocco or Tunisia... but where will we find this sum for this operation?"

When a specialist surgeon became available at a remote clinic, MAF made the journey possible, flying the family in just two hours. "I thank MAF for their presence in Guinea, otherwise we would have had to go by road, and it would have exhausted us," Aissatou said.

The operation was a success. "Today, here is my daughter who manages to open her mouth, something she had stopped doing for a good ten years," she said.

Photographer: Joel Conte.

"I thank MAF for their presence in Guinea, otherwise we would have had to go by road, and it would have exhausted us."

🗨️ AISSATOU,
YELIKHA'S MOTHER

Angeline's Story

A life-saving flight in Madagascar

In Madagascar, 35-year-old Angeline - a mother of two - nearly lost her life and the life of her unborn child to an ectopic pregnancy. Her remote village airstrip was unusable, but local people came together to clear it in time for MAF to land.

MAF flew Angeline and her mother Vaha, to a hospital where she received vital medical care. "She is the last of my three daughters. I knew she was not

doing well, but I had no resources to help her," said Vaha. "So thank you for bringing us here."

By bringing medical help to where it's needed most, MAF is investing in the health, dignity and future of the next generation.

Stewart Ayling, from MAF Tanzania explains, "It's part of our role as MAF that we provide connections between people. If we all work together, we can all make a better outcome."

Photographer: Gino Antsatiana Randrianasolo.



Angeline being assisted by Pilot Rutger Bakker.

"If we all work together, we can all make a better outcome."

STEWART AYLING,
MAF TANZANIA

Neema's Story

Surviving a hyena attack in Tanzania



Dr Maher Anous with Neema and her mother Juliana.

Three-year-old Neema from rural Tanzania suffered unimaginable injuries. Attacked by a hyena while sheltering from rain, she lost an eye and much of her face. The attack shocked her village and devastated her young mother Juliana, who had left Neema with her grandmother while she fetched flour.

"When she returned, she was met with shouts of terror, and the hyena was chewing off her eye region," Juliana said.

With injuries too complex for local treatment, reconstructive surgery was urgently needed. MAF pilot Mark Liprini flew reconstructive surgeon Dr Maher Anous from Arusha to Dodoma

in just over an hour, saving days of travel and enabling immediate care. "Her case is one of the worst I've seen," Dr Maher said. "The danger is that she becomes a burden for her family."

The first surgery was successful, and Dr Maher is planning a second 12-to-15-hour operation with skin grafts and microsurgery. Though the road ahead is long, MAF's flight has given Neema a chance not just to survive - but to begin healing.

Stories by Sean Atkins, Joel Conte and Gino Antsatiana Randrianasolo. Edited by Eleanor Rivers. Photos by Joel Conte, Gino Antsatiana Randrianasolo, and Dr Maher Anous.



✓ PARTNERSHIPS

Invest in the future

By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help MAF keep flying for years to come.

When Robyn Hanstock lived in Papua New Guinea in the early 1980s, she experienced the heartbreaking reality of isolation. Her 16-year-old daughter, Judith, became critically ill with malaria. A medevac flight arranged through the Australian Government was cancelled, and tragically, Judith passed away.

"I know the despair that isolation can bring," Robyn shares. "My heart goes out to others needing help in that moment of crisis."

Today, Robyn and her husband Michael have chosen to leave a gift in their Will to MAF. They want to help others access lifesaving

flights that weren't available to Judith, and to share God's love in a deeply practical way.

"MAF is a lifeline of God's compassion – His love in action," Robyn says.

For 80 years, MAF has been reaching the world's most isolated places. As we look to the future, we're training new pilots and engineers, developing local leaders, and building sustainable programs to ensure help, hope and healing continue for generations to come.

By leaving a gift in your Will, you're helping make that future possible. Your legacy will ensure MAF can keep flying to the hardest-to-reach places, providing emergency evacuations, Bibles, aid and the gospel. It's more than a gift. It's an eternal investment in God's Kingdom.



**Leave a gift
in your Will**



Will you prayerfully consider leaving a gift in your Will to help keep MAF flying – bringing hope, help and the love of Jesus to the world's most isolated people?

Two generations, one gospel mission

After decades of dedication and perseverance, a dream has come true in Dekai, Papua, with a complete Bible translation in the Ngalik language – marking a new chapter of hope for an entire language community.

This story began more than 60 years ago, with the pioneering spirit of two missionaries: Ed and Shirley Maxey, who arrived in the village of Silimo, Papua, in 1960.

With great commitment, they not only built a house and an airstrip, but also dedicated themselves to learning and writing down the Ngalik language. Ed and Shirley found support in two local young men, Enos and Amos, who passionately devoted themselves to translating the Bible.

In 1989, something remarkable happened: Buzz, Shirley and Ed's son, together with his wife

Myrna, took over and continued the translation work that Buzz's parents had started.

"Two generations, one mission. Over all these years, the Gospel captured the hearts of the people, even amid many tribal wars."

Throughout this time, MAF assisted the project, providing flights and logistics support so that the translators could continue their work.

The Bible in the Ngalik language.



The joy of the MAF team was all the greater when they were able to participate in the festive Bible dedication ceremonies, in the town of Dekai last February.

However, the work is not yet finished. There are still numerous language groups in Papua waiting for the Bible in their mother tongue. Please pray for missionaries, communities and MAF as they work together on Bible translations.



The gospel captured the hearts of the people in Dekai, Papua.

*Story and photos by Debbie Klynstra.
Edited by Petra Ming.*

Following God's call into Mission Aviation

MAF is committed to equipping the next generation of mission workers through practical, purpose-driven training. We're thrilled to share stories from some of the people God has raised up to train for service with MAF in recent years.



Swiss pilot Timothée Berger trained in Mareeba, Australia.

Timothée

At 15, Timothée Berger's aviation imagination was piqued while flying radio-controlled aircraft at a Christian aviation camp.

Now, the Swiss pilot is flying with MAF in Arnhem Land, Australia, where he is part of a new generation of pilots transporting healthcare teams, students and teachers to bring help, hope and healing to this remote region.

"I was interested in aviation only if I could serve the Lord," said Timothée. "There was this lady who came and shared her testimony about her journey as a missionary bush pilot. And I found it really fascinating."

Timothée chose the MAF Training Centre in Mareeba, Australia, as his study destination because he wanted to improve his English while he learnt to fly. "From the day you start, up to the end, you fly the whole time. And so probably you learn a bit quicker," he said.

And his advice for anyone seeking a similar path is "Be patient and persevering for sure, because it is a long journey. And keep praying about it."

Explore
your
calling
with MAF



From discovering their calling to developing skills in the field, young people like Timothée Berger, Melissa Higgins, Jade Kunika, Matthew Veale and Chris Watkins are stepping into roles that serve isolated communities. Their journeys—whether in the cockpit or behind the scenes—demonstrate how MAF opens doors to a life of impact and what it takes to follow God's call into mission aviation.

Jade

In Papua New Guinea, Jade Kunika started as ground crew and worked his way up to Maintenance Operations Supervisor at MAF's base in Mount Hagen.

"It wasn't easy," Jade said. "To be an engineer involves a lot of discipline, hard work, commitment, dedication.

"Sometimes there are times in which you get to isolate yourself from the rest of the group, trying to make your progress, studying, to pass those exams to be licensed."

As Jade reflects on his journey, he added: "Ten years ago, I didn't know that I would be able to do this. And yeah, I would say thank you to MAF. Thank you to God for MAF."



Jade Kunika at MAF's base in Mount Hagen.

"Ten years ago, I didn't know that I would be able to do this. Thank you to God for MAF."

 **JADE KUNIKA,**
MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR, PNG

Melissa



Pilot Melissa Higgins in Arnhem Land.

Melissa Higgins first joined MAF in 2022 as a Reservations Officer in Arnhem Land. A few months in, she sensed God's call to swap the desk for the cockpit.

Already a qualified pilot, she was facing a choice of pursuing a career with airlines or flying for MAF. "After getting here, I fell in love with the place pretty quickly," she said.

Now, after completing the necessary training to become a MAF pilot, Mel flies across East Arnhem Land, where rough roads and seasonal floods isolate communities.

On one flight, Mel was dropping off school kids in Gangan when the call came through to pick up a pregnant woman who was unwell. She removed a seat from the plane to give the woman extra space, they prayed together, and they were soon on their way.

"She was in a fair bit of pain trying to get into the plane," said Mel. "But then once we got up and flying, within ten minutes she'd fallen asleep, and she slept all the way back."

Matthew and Chris

Starting their learning journey in the UK, Matthew Veale and Chris Watkins talked about MAF's Engineering Training Scheme and their dream of serving isolated communities.

"I really wanted to join MAF, I felt called to that, and I always enjoyed learning about how things worked. This was a natural progression of all those things," Matthew said. "I'm getting a lot of really great experience in a variety of aircraft, the types MAF use out in programs."

Chris has finished the two-year course in Perth, Scotland, and needs to add practical experience before getting his engineering licence.

"It's been a great journey, it's something I wasn't sure I could do, but MAF were very encouraging and helped me to see which areas I could work on," he said.



Chris Watkins.

"I was working in IT and I started becoming disillusioned with the corporate lifestyle, and I wondered if my 9 to 5 was something I could give to God as well."

And his advice for the next generation feeling the call to serve? "Get in contact, speak to the guys, they'll be able to help you find the right place for you."

Stories like Timothée's, Melissa's, Jade's, Matthew's and Chris' show what's possible when young people are equipped and empowered to serve through mission aviation.

But what if more young people from the very communities MAF serves, across the Asia Pacific and Africa, could access the same training and employment opportunities? *Discover how you can get involved on the next page.*



Matthew Veale.

"I really wanted to join MAF, I felt called to that, and I always enjoyed learning about how things worked."

 **MATTHEW VEALE,**
MAF ENGINEER

Let's raise up future pilots, engineers and mission workers from within remote regions.

To equip and train people who already know the land, speak the language and understand the culture. To expand the impact and reach of MAF for generations to come.

Give to the Local Capacity Fund

Your gift will help provide scholarships for Indigenous trainees, opening doors to pilot training, engineering, and mission roles.



Spread the Word or Express Interest

We're currently seeking expressions of interest from indigenous people from the countries where we serve. If that's you, or someone you know, we'd love to hear from you.



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Cover photo: 'In the remote village of Chidudu, Tanzania, children pause and gaze in awe as the MAF plane touches down.'

Photographer: Annet Nabbanja

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Invest in Local Capacity

Right now, there are committed individuals in locations where MAF works, who are ready to serve – but they need support to take the next step.



Your gift will help identify, train and equip local men and women with the skills, experience and support they need to make a lasting difference in their communities.



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