



## Message from the Chair

As I awoke this morning and listened to the news, I was appalled again at the damage human beings are doing to each other around the world. I hear about children dying in Syria and other places, and wonder, as I am sure you do, what can we do?

The answer to myself was - we cannot do everything but we can work harder at doing what we know works to stop the death of children and their families in need of good nutrition. We know, from a previous newsletter, the wonderful AOG Vietnamese project, where malnutrition was reduced in one school by 95% and another by 80%. How fantastic that would be if we could do this in all the areas we have projects in.

I have just returned from our district conference where I spoke to many people at our about the opportunities that FPS RAG can offer clubs preparing Global Grants. Hopefully the discussion these members will have with their clubs when they return will light a candle in their minds to work in conjunction with other clubs, to make a difference to nutrition levels in another part of the world.

In April we celebrated the creation of a publication for Tasmania, which was warmly received by the community, - 'A guide to Nutritious food plants of Tasmania'. This was made possible by funding received from the Central Coast Council. Community groups, schools and the council have been given these publications, which has created excitement to make a difference in their communities.

As an organisation, funding is our biggest challenge at present. I encourage each of you to urge your clubs to support Food Plant Solutions RAG. We know we can continue to make a difference with your support.

Yours in Rotary Service.

**PDG Una Hobday, Chair Food Plant Solutions**

## World Vision Timor Leste partners with FPS

Where there is nutrition there is impact. The 2016 Global Nutrition Report states that for every \$1 invested in nutrition returns \$16. "Other agriculture interventions can't return near this much" says World Vision Australia Food Security Advisor Dr. Brian Hilton. The reason nutrition provides such high ROI's is that better nourished children have a lifetime of increased earning potential due to increased cognitive capacity. If their mother participates in a nutrition project the earning potential of that child's siblings also increases. Malnourished children never catch up in school with their better nourished class mates. World Vision Australia through DFAT (ANCP) funding has initiated a project called "Better Food Better Health" in East Timor. The aim of this project is to combine agricultural interventions, designed to reduce poverty, with nutrition interventions, to help mothers feed their young children more and better food. Timor Leste is very poor and has the third worst malnutrition rates in the world. That's where partner Food Plant Solutions comes in. FPS has created two educational publications; 'Potentially Important Food Plants of Timor-Leste' in English and 'Food Plants for Healthy Diets in Timor-Leste' in Tetun. World Vision recognises that these publications will give young mother's more information about which plants are high in nutrients, particularly those that are high in Iron and Vitamin A, (both deficient in East Timor). The plants in the booklets will correspond to many of the plants being promoted by the project such as the moringa tree, red kidney beans, pumpkins, orange sweet potato and other local foods. "I knew of Food Plant Solutions and their publications but I am now understanding the power of the 28,500 plants in the Food Plants International database, from which Food Plant Solutions works", states Dr.



Hilton. It is hoped that this is the start of a continuing partnership between World Vision and Food Plant Solutions. For further details about the project please contact:

[info@foodplantsolutions.org](mailto:info@foodplantsolutions.org)

World Vision

**Donate Now!** - every \$1 donated will help 1 child in a developing country –

<http://foodplantsolutions.org/donate-to-food-plant-solutions/>

## Program Countries

FPS has either developed or is in the process of developing educational publications for the following countries:

- Solomon Islands
- Papua New Guinea
- Timor-Leste
- Haiti
- Sierra Leone
- Guinea
- Nigeria
- Uganda
- Tanzania
- Mozambique
- Swaziland
- Sri Lanka
- Cambodia
- Vietnam
- Philippines
- Western Pacific Islands
- North Korea
- China
- N.E. India
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Indonesia
- Nepal
- South Africa
- Northern Thailand
- Ecuador
- Angola
- Pakistan
- Ethiopia
- Madagascar
- Bangladesh
- Rwanda

**Food Plant Solutions –  
A self-sustainable solution  
that empowers local  
people to make informed  
choices about what plants  
to grow that will  
nutritiously feed their  
family.**

## Uruguay's Sustainable School



A rural school in Uruguay is becoming quite famous because of its sustainability. It is not connected to the national electrical grid and much of the building was built with "throw-away" materials like car tyres, glass bottles, plastic bottles, cans – all held together with wood, glass and cement.

The school (Jaureguiberry) opened last year and has an enrolment now of 39 but soon will grow to about 100. The school basically produces no waste and near the classrooms is a compost-fed kitchen garden. Rainwater is collected from the roof to use on the garden and in the toilets – the teachers have basic training in environmental studies and integrate most school work to sustainable concepts.

The children devote at least an hour to the garden each week, picking fruits and vegetables that they have planted and raised, and which they will eat in the canteen.

"There is no better learning than to experience things for yourself," said Alvarez, the Director.

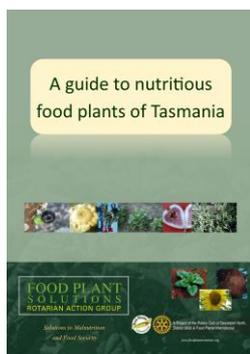
## FPS in Tasmania

The Tasmanian State Government has a goal to make Tasmania the healthiest population in Australia by 2025. It is recognised as an ambitious target, particularly as Tasmanians have some of the worst health outcomes in the country. The 'Central Coast Council Local Food Security Strategy – Growing Our Health, June 2016' found 'only 46.3% of adults in Central Coast eat the recommended two fruit and only 10.8% eat the recommended five serves of vegetables per day. Potentially, this means that almost 90% of the adult population has a less than ideal nutritional diet. A poor diet leads to poor health – being overweight or obese, having heart disease, diabetes and cancers.' FPS, recognising these significant health challenges in its own home state, created a resource that helps to facilitate change.

There are countless gardening books on both 'common' and 'indigenous plants'. Very few, if any, of them combine both, whilst also providing nutritional data. FPS has created a guide that contains this information, giving those educating the community on the benefits of healthy eating a very valuable tool. The guide contains information on approximately 40 edible plants, from all the major food groups, covering how and where to grow, what parts are edible, how to use those parts, nutritional information and a photo to assist with identification.

"We want to show people the scientific evidence in an accessible way and make them feel confident about growing their own food," Project Manager, Karalyn Hingston said. The publication was officially launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March by Central Coast Mayor – Jan Bonde.

There are many programs operating around the state, at all levels, most working from different resources. This guide could be a very valuable tool to each of these organisations and help to achieve consistency in the message that is being delivered. For further details contact us at [info@foodplantsolutions.org](mailto:info@foodplantsolutions.org)



## Meat or plants?

**Bruce French - Officer of the Order of Australia**

Mid last year my old Agronomy lecturer Dr Jim Yates died, aged 92. Almost 50 years ago I can remember him giving a persuasive lecture on what you could do with 1 hectare of land. If you tried producing meat using sheep or cattle you could produce enough meat to feed a family for a few weeks. But using food plants you could produce enough to feed them well for the whole year. Animals do have a minor but integral role to play in farming systems and diets.



One hectare is the average farm size for the world. About 500 million smallholders are seeking to feed 2 billion people from their holdings of about 1 hectare. These are the target group for Food Plant Solutions.

These days there is a fad of announcing some specific food plant as a "super-food". Usually this simply means that someone has discovered an unfamiliar plant and realised that many of these neglected plants have high nutrient levels and often also additional health benefits. Most mothers in rural locations have no way of knowing the food values of their local plants. In contrast to using diversity, methods that produce high yields from a narrow range of selected varieties often means these benefits have been diminished. Very commonly it is nutritionists not agronomists that are raising these issues.

The Food Plant Solutions Field Guides unpack the detailed information from the Food Plants International database into smaller units for specific countries, focusing on edible plants that are suited to the country or region, grow with minimal inputs and are high in nutrients. With this information we can empower the rural poor and malnourished to feed their families well.



## ROTARY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 1998, when the Global Polio Eradication Initiative began, polio paralysed approximately **350,000** children per year. Due to the dedicated efforts of Rotary and its partners there has been a decrease of 99% in polio cases.

In 2015, approximately **2,600,000** children under the age of 5 died from malnutrition linked causes.

**Like polio, hunger and malnutrition is preventable. Like polio, Food Plant Solutions needs extensive partnerships.**

**Like polio, a long-term commitment is needed.**

We are calling on all Rotarians to follow 'End Polio Now' with '**End Malnutrition NOW**'

Please contact us at [info@foodplantsolutions.org](mailto:info@foodplantsolutions.org) to become part of '**End Malnutrition NOW**'

**Donate Now!** - every \$1 donated will help 1 child in a developing country – <http://foodplantsolutions.org/donate-to-food-plant-solutions/>