Thank you Mr. Beutillschiess (Mr. B) for giving us the opportunity to talk this afternoon, and we congratulate the school for initiating the study of Carbon Management.

We are aware that each time we send a container to PNG we are having an impact on the carbon footprint. Each of our containers has approximately 16 tonnes of educational and medical items, that would otherwise be going to landfill. We think that our recycling of these items has a positive effect on the carbon management of Australia. We also send good quality containers so that they can be used for safe storage at the other end.

We would like to thank St. Peter’s College for supporting the Kimbe Assistance Project, in particular Mr. B and those students and staff who have been involved with the salvaging of items that are either in Kimbe now, or are in the next container awaiting shipment to Papua New Guinea.

As you know, we are in the process of filling another 20 foot container to send to the Diocese of Kimbe in PNG. This will be the fourth container we have sent.

Today we hope to give you an insight into how a project can evolve from absolutely nothing into a project that has many benefits – most of which were not even thought of nine years ago when we both retired from paid employment.

**The first event that changed our lives was World Youth Days in Sydney 2008.**

Visitors from all over the world came to Australia in July 2008 for World Youth Day, Sydney. The pilgrims from overseas visited other parts of Australia in the week prior to gathering in Sydney. People from Diocese of Kimbe in West New Britain Province stayed in the Western Region of the Sale Diocese – particularly Narre Warren, Berwick, Pakenham and Iona parishes.

Parishioners had been asked to offer a bed to the pilgrims while they were staying here. We volunteered to provide a bed for two pilgrims, and were particularly pleased when we were told that the visitors to our region were from Papua New Guinea. We’ll explain why shortly.

After the visitors arrived it quickly became obvious to the host families that the pilgrims were rich in spirit, but had few material possessions: most arrived with few clothes and little or no money. Host families quickly raided their wardrobes and gave a lot of warm clothing to the pilgrims. The pilgrims were extremely grateful, and soon a great rapport was established between hosts and pilgrims.

One day while they were in the area, the pilgrims spent the morning doing some charity work in the parishes. One of our visitors helped at the Pakenham Vinnie’s store. When we collected him at the end of the day he was very excited as he had bought a new pair of sneakers at the shop for $1.00. We were devastated when he told us that with his new sneakers his toes were no longer curled up. The previous day we had walked around Melbourne for five hours with the pilgrims and he never uttered any complaint about his sore feet.
World Youth Days and the visit of the people from PNG had a strong impact on a group of host families from the Narre Warren area. After its completion they met and decided to work to assist the people in the areas of education and health, and to find ways in particular to help the youth of the Diocese of Kimbe.

We had lived in PNG in the late 1960s, and were able to communicate with the pilgrims in Pidgin English. While the pilgrims spoke English reasonably well, having someone who they were comfortable to converse with in a common language made them feel more at home. In PNG there are three official languages, English, Tok Pisin and Motu, but each village has its own language or dialect. Overall there are approximately 700 languages and 2000 dialects in PNG.

Adrian and I decided if we used our Frequent flyer points we could visit Kimbe in 2009 to assess the needs of the Diocese of Kimbe, and give a report back to the committee. Prior to our visit we asked if we could see schools and health clinics. This gave us an excellent insight into their conditions. To us it was very sad as the country had not progressed from when we lived there 40 plus years ago. The visit to schools and medical clinics showed there are few resources available, and that cash is very limited – maintenance of facilities is very poor. Communication is difficult as there are few roads and they are in very poor condition. Most transport is by dinghy and walking. Fuel for the boats is expensive, so there are few opportunities for outlying villagers to get produce to a market. Around town there are PMVs which are either Toyota Hi Ace vans or trucks with wooden seats for passengers, or perhaps the back of a ute. The vehicles are pretty run down.

In Kimbe (the capital), mobile phones for texting is popular. But outlying villages probably don’t have a tower near by or, it may be that the tower works in dry weather only.

Because of the distance involved, outlying villages sometimes are virtually cashless societies. In many cases, the only cash income coming to a family may be from a family member working elsewhere in the country.

**WEST NEW BRITAIN**

**West New Britain** is a province of Papua New Guinea on the island of New Britain. The provincial capital is Kimbe. The area of the province is 21,000 km², and there were 242,676 inhabitants as at the 2011 census.

There are substantial oil palm plantations on the north coast of the province especially in the Kimbe region, and logging activities in the interior and on the south coast. The Walindi dive resort near Kimbe is a significant tourist destination for overseas visitors to Papua New Guinea.

Kimbe Port is the third largest port in PNG

WNBP is located about 5 degrees South of the equator and has a typical tropical climate. There are really two seasons – a wet season and a not so wet season! The majority of the
people live in villages around the coast, but there are many villages within the mountains that run along the length of the island. The area is prone to Earthquakes, and Cyclones.

During our trip in 2009 we were taken on a 250km boat trip to outlying villages and it was magnificent to be welcomed in a village which was spick and span and the dirt appeared to have been raked. The school even though it was remote was no different and the oval was beautifully cut. There is no road access to this village so there would be no ride on mowers or tractors to carry-out any work. The work would have been done by the students who take their grass knives to school.

Upon our return in 2009 we reported back to the Kimbe Assistance Project committee the results of our investigation of the area and it was decided that the Kimbe Diocese certainly needed assistance. It was then decided to research the feasibility of sending a container of educational and medical items to the Kimbe Diocese.

But how do we go about it as a twenty foot container can hold a mammoth amount of items. If we are just talking about A4 boxes, that would be over 1,400 of them.

The list of questions started:

a. Where do you buy containers?
b. How do you ship it to PNG?
c. When do ships go to Kimbe?
d. How long will it take to fill the container?
e. Where can we safely store the container?
f. From where do we collect the materials?
g. Where do we get the boxes to pack the materials in?
h. Where will we do the packing?
i. What costs are involved?
j. Customs regulations?
k. HOW DO WE START???

We decided it was now time to start praying!

Our prayers were answered one day when we went to the optometrist. There we met up with someone who told us that a person in Pakenham Rotary had led a team that been responsible for a container that had gone to Papua New Guinea.

We were able to track Andrew down to a farming property at Pakenham South. He invited us down and in the process of giving us advice he offered us the opportunity to leave the container on his property while we packed it. This usually takes six to ten months.

We contacted the staff at the Diocese of Kimbe to make sure that they wanted us to collect the goods. The phone call to Sr. Benedicta, the Catholic Education Secretary, was heart wrenching when she said could we also send some pencils and rulers.

This really set the project on its way.

In the previous twelve months the committee had done a small amount of fund raising so in September 2010 we were able to purchase our first container. This was the next
learning experience as the container had to come with a compliance plate for overseas shipping with an expiry date that allowed us time to fill it, ship it and for it to arrive in Kimbe.

Next we had to spread the word that we were looking for items. We spoke at Our Lady Help of Christians and St Michael’s churches, and schools in the area. Everybody spread the word among their friends and work colleagues. We made use of email to send lists of what we were collecting and talked to anyone who would listen.

Phone calls started coming in and we were amazed at the amount of material that we were offered. In time most of this would have gone to land fill. Very quickly we had to put out a call for boxes as we had been advised by Andrew that having uniform size boxes, would make it easier to pack the container. Also unless the container is packed tightly you are paying to transport air, and everything moves around.

Safety has always been an important consideration. Sloppy packing can cause the load inside the container to shift causing a potential danger:

a. To the ship as the container could become unbalanced.
b. The staff at the Diocese could be injured as they unload.
c. We could be injured as we load the container.
d. The Goods in the container could be damaged.

With Andrew’s advice and guidance we now had a container, goods, a shipping company and possible departure dates. It was time to start packing.

Our next task was to check the books for suitability. As an example it is no good sending a book on Shakespeare or Japanese to Kimbe Schools as it is not part of their curriculum.

We also found that it was most important to completely fill each box. We had to keep in mind that the boxes were going to be stacked at least nine high. With an average weight of ten kilos per box the stack would quickly collapse if one box was unstable. It is very easy to fill a box quickly, but to fill it thoroughly is the time consuming problem. Unfortunately books are not all the same size so using similar boxes also helps to cut down on your packing time.

We label every box as this saves time at the other end and ensures they go directly to Elementary, Primary, or High School or Poinini the Ag/Tech School or a Medical Clinic.

The stationery items such as pencils, textas, erasers, sharpeners, rulers etc go into every nook and cranny to completely fill every box.

During our collection phase we received a request from the Diocese for some netball uniforms and bibs for one of the schools.

We asked a teacher friend who obtained some old uniforms from Mater Christi College, and she also suggested we contact Netball Victoria for some excess gear. Netball Victoria circulated our request among the Netball Associations in Victoria which led to us being given uniforms, bibs and old practice balls. And would you believe it also resulted in us being given an ultrasound machine for the maternity clinic at one of the
Catholic Health Clinics. At a later stage we found a volunteer to go to Kimbe to train the staff.

It took us from October 2009 until May 2010 to fill the container, but our work was not over yet as we still had the paperwork to complete for Customs out of Australia, and Customs into PNG. We also had to provide information to the shipping company. Unfortunately we had not been keeping a record of all the boxes so we had to call on Andrew to give us some help on how to come up with the required paperwork. Ever year since then we have made sure that we record items as soon as we load them into the container. Finally the paperwork was completed and the container was certainly full – Once again we had to get Andrew with his forklift to finally close the doors! And on 17 May 2010 we saw the container leave Pakenham South to go to the Port of Melbourne for shipping to Kimbe.

We found out that the container had actually been delivered to the Cathedral grounds before Customs cleared the container for distribution to the schools. This meant that the container was exactly how we had packed it, and there had been no pilferage in transit. Pilferage and corruption can be major problems when sending containers overseas. This reassured us that it was safe to proceed with further containers, because the need is certainly there. All up the cost of the first container with shipping was $6750.00. This cost went up to $7580.00 in 2012.

As this was our first ever project we wanted to ensure that everything was going smoothly at the other end. We booked our trip to Kimbe in 2010 to coincide with the container arriving but because of shipping delays the container did not arrive until two weeks after we arrived back in Australia. This was frustrating but a contact at the Fred Hollows Eye clinic took photos for us and this gave us proof of the unpacking procedure. It was very exciting to see boxes which we had packed sitting on the ground in the Cathedral Complex with Customs Officials checking everything out.

We subsequently visited the region again in 2011 and 2012 to reassess their needs and to plan for the following containers.

In 2011 we first visited Poinini the Agricultural/Technical Boarding School

The school was built by missionaries (Christian Brothers), but since independence in 1975 there has been little maintenance of the facilities. A new Principal was appointed in 2009 and he is working to improve the facilities at the school. Local politicians had made promises to provide computers and tools, but they never eventuated. We were able to give them 15 computers in 2011. Previously they had three computers for 35 secretarial students.

We were shown some fine examples of the student’s carpentry skills. They hope to sell these desks to other schools to raise funds for more materials and tools. We also saw a small group working on a set of steps, but only one person could work at a time as they did not have sufficient tools.

The few tools they had in the woodworking and motor trades wings were secured behind locked arc mesh, so security was reasonable. One thing that adds to security is that the majority of the staff are housed on site. Employers in PNG do provide basic housing for staff in most cases.
A visit to the Tech School reinforced our resolve to give them some material assistance. In the 2012 container we sent up additional computers for the Business Studies Course. In addition we sent donated power and woodworking tools. This year we have continued the drive for the Woodworking classes and have also been sourcing materials for the Hospitality/Cooking and Dressmaking Course. Unfortunately we have had little success in sourcing tools for the motor trades’ wing. The students also study Agriculture and Horticulture.

Has the Project been a success?

*Most certainly.*

Educationally, the Schools in the Diocese have received at least three thousand boxes of books as well as stationery, teacher’s aids, tables and chairs, and sporting equipment.

Medically, the Fred Hollows Eye Clinic now has an Electronic Eye Microscope for operations which also has an additional eye piece for training.

The Catholic Health System has two Ultrasound Machines as well as medical equipment, additional hospital furniture, linen, and mobility aids. They have also set up a medical library. One of the outlying Health Clinics has solar power. This now replaces kerosene lamps at night.

The Priests have additional vestments, sacred vessels and Stations of the Cross for at least one of their Churches in each of their Parishes, plus the start of a library. The churches are very basic. This is typical of the majority of the churches we have seen in the Kimbe Diocese.

We are still trying to replace the Soy Sauce bottle that we saw in one of the Priests travelling Mass kits, and aiming to replace some of the altar boys’ soutanes which had holes in them.

*Finally – how do we think we contribute to better carbon management?*

*We can:*
- Recycle School Materials
- Stationery
- Culled Library Stock
- Pre Loved Books
- Encyclopedia
- Superseded Equipment
- Technical School Requisites
- Medical Equipment

In total at least 48 tonnes so far.

*Our aim throughout the whole project has always been to give “a hand up – not a hand out and not to create rubbish at the other end”.*