fws
annual report
2007-2008
part 1 letter from the vice-president

Dear fws friends and supporters

Welcome to the third annual report for foodwatershelter inc (fws). Over the year, we have celebrated great victories and suffered unthinkable heartbreak.

Since fws was established in 2005, purposeful planning and unstoppable energy have been key in getting us where we are so quickly. So, at the end of the 07/08 financial year, where is that?

Well, we have been operating in Tanzania now for well over one year. The Kesho Leo children’s village building is nearing completion, we have 10 trained house-mamas ready to move in with their children, we have hosted 40 volunteers at the site and enjoyed the support of approximately 100 volunteers in Australia, all working overtime to continue the professionalism and progress of fws.

The start of the year saw our president, Rebecka Delforce, and her partner, our building foreman Darren Stratti, head to Tanzania with funds raised and a solid mission to commence building Kesho Leo children’s village. They spent the next 12 months managing the building process, which involved training 30 subsistence farmers to become builders, and also established fws as an NGO in Tanzania.

fws secretary Shona Arneil later arrived in Tanzania to begin the search for house-mamas, which I joined her to complete. We had the pleasure of informing 12 women before Christmas that they had food, water, shelter, education, and health and social welfare assured for their own, and their children’s, future.

In early 2008, fws began hosting volunteers at our volunteer village and we believe they’ve all enjoyed their experience here; building, accounting, administering nursing services or conducting health and English lessons with our house-mamas and labourers.

But on June 30, 2008, an event occurred that broke all our hearts. Our brave and beautiful building foreman Darren Stratti was shot and killed. This event rocked us to the core and our initial focus was simply getting our volunteers home to Australia, while our local manager kept things running at Kesho Leo children’s village until an fws management team returned.

We never questioned completing Kesho Leo for Darren and the community of Sinon. Both in Australia and Tanzania, Darren will be remembered in everything we do. We work and we heal, and we look forward to all that Kesho Leo children’s village is, and will be, to this community. This incredible building and the spirit of the people here in Sinon are symbols of hope for us all.

Kelsey Wilson
Vice President
foodwatershelter inc

* Our fws president, Rebecka Delforce, is on leave until March 2009. We wish her all the best for this much-needed time and the year ahead.

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2.0 FWS Management Committee

Rebecka Delforce (FWS President) is a journalist/magazine editor and has experience in the administrative management of The School of St Jude in Tanzania. Rebecka spent this financial year working full-time for FWS, on-site in Tanzania, as the project manager.

Kelsey Wilson (FWS Vice-President) is a social worker with qualifications in psychology. She has experience working as a social worker and AIDS educator at the Edmund Rice School in Tanzania. Kelsey spent this financial year coordinating FWS’ Australian activities and managed to fit in a trip to Tanzania to see the project herself.

Shona Arneil (FWS Secretary) is a primary-school teacher who specialises in teaching English as a second language. She has experience in developing a skills-based intensive English program at a school in Tanzania. Shona spent this financial year heading the Queensland fundraising team, managing volunteers’ placements and working for five months in Tanzania interviewing and finally employing our house-mamas.

Anne O’Donoghue (FWS Treasurer) is a primary-school teacher who has experience teaching intensive English programs in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as Australia, where her students are newly arrived African refugees. Anne spent this financial year heading individual fundraisers in NSW and working with our new accountant on the huge task of Treasury.

Edwina Hammond is a primary-school teacher who has experience teaching children in schools in Tanzania, Thailand and Europe. Edwina spent this financial year living and working in the UK and lobbying potential donors to consider FWS in their philanthropic plans.

2.1 FWS Mission Statement

Food Water Shelter Inc (FWS) is an Australian not-for-profit, non-denominational, non-governmental organisation that builds and runs eco-friendly children’s villages with education and social and health facilities for vulnerable women, their children and orphans in developing countries.
2.2 fws objectives

fws meets the above mission statement by providing:

- nourishing meals to orphans
- access to water for orphans and their wider community
- a safe shelter for orphans
- access to health facilities (including AIDS care) for orphans
- after-school social and educational programs that teach life skills to orphans
- weekend classes covering environmental and health issues for the wider community
- access to local primary and secondary schools
- all of the above is conducted with minimal impact on the local environment (we endeavour to meet international eco-friendly standards on waste minimisation, energy efficiency, water conservation and biodiversity conservation).

2.3 fws current project

Project — Kesho Leo children’s village, which means “tomorrow today” in Kiswahili, the national language of Tanzania.

Aim — To build and run an eco-friendly children’s village with a mix of early learning, keep-your-culture and health programs in Tanzania, East Africa.

How fws is tackling this project

Over this financial year, fws has been constructing the Kesho Leo children’s village on a 2.3-acre block in the village of Sinon, near Arusha, Tanzania.

The children’s village is being built with the combined efforts of a skeleton volunteer team and local labourers.

A volunteer village was built on another block of land, 1.5km away, to provide accommodation for volunteers, away from the Kesho Leo families’ home, and to act as an office for the running of the organisation.

House-mamas have been employed and are attending classes, run by volunteers, in health education and English.

Children of the house-mamas are attending classes, run by volunteers outside of school hours, in English and maths.

The Kesho Leo children’s village is being built to include:

- eight family ‘homes’ with four rooms each
- one live-in manager’s house
- a health clinic
- an early learning education centre
- a homework/community education room
- a large communal kitchen (with a modified clay-oven)
- a communal dining area
- a sewing room
- eco-friendly compost toilets
- shower rooms and a laundry, draining to a grey-water catchment area
- a bio-gas system
- 26 water tanks, fed by the roof
- a water aquifer (underground grey-water catchment)

We are also establishing an organic farming plot to help provide fruit and vegetables with which to feed Kesho Leo residents. We are building a small compound for livestock, and duck/fish ponds as part of a whole permaculture system.

Once building is complete, Kesho Leo children’s village will open its facilities to 10 house-mamas, their 25 children, and up to 40 orphaned children who will, of course, benefit from food, water, shelter, accelerated learning, a deep understanding...
of their own culture, and not least plenty of love and caring, and a very bright future.

2.4 fws methodology

fws interactive learning programs
Interactive learning programs will be facilitated by local teachers and carers who are employed by fws. These programs will focus on three key areas, which are not often addressed by schools in developing countries:

1. Learning about living (fostering local culture)
Kesho Leo children will be given farming responsibilities so they will come to recognise the importance of these living practices in terms of their livelihood and also develop a sense of ownership towards the farm.

2. Learning to think (fostering interactive, holistic learning)
By implementing an early, and positive, interactive learning program into the lives of our children, we’ll be establishing or re-establishing their learning skills. Our daily on-site classes will be based around attaining skills, understanding processes and feeling successful. By relying on each other for support and also relying on themselves, our kids will be encouraged to develop an enthusiasm for learning. fws aims to encourage a generation of kids to think, question and transfer problem-solving skills across into their everyday lives.

3. Learning to think together (fostering social skills):
Social skills are important in any family and Kesho Leo is to be a family that fosters a philosophy of working together. While it is important that children build self-reliance, the ability to work effectively as a team and rely on one another is an integral part of living in any developing country and also in a large group.

Through fws’ skill-building education program, we will give the children in residence the best chance to succeed at school, so that their education empowers them to become employed, contributing, and possibly even leading, adult members of their community.

Building eco-friendly structures and employing sustainable practices
Kesho Leo has been built, and will operate, with minimal impact on the environment while promoting positive environmental practices in the local community. Through leading by example in practising environmentally sustainable farming and living methods, we spread an important message about living for the future.

In the design of Kesho Leo, our aims have been to minimise waste, re-use and recycle; be energy efficient; conserve water; treat waste water and effluent; employ biodiversity conservation techniques (protecting and managing local ecosystems); and protect air quality.

fws local management and fostering of local culture
A core principle of fws is to ensure that Kesho Leo is managed and staffed by local people. We value the importance of projects in developing countries being managed at a grassroots level, so that local people are able to contribute to, and manage their own, future in a way that is in keeping with their culture. Mohammed Salim (Mudi) will be our live-in manager at Kesho Leo. He has been working with the Australian fws management team closely this year, and will gradually take over to manage Kesho Leo children’s village more independently.

It is important to those working with fws that the Kesho Leo children not only learn about their local culture, but actually learn to live it. By staffing locally we are ensuring that our children are exposed to the cultural education they would have had if their parents were alive.
**fws’ provision of healthcare**

By providing access to health facilities as well as an on-staff nurse (who will initially work closely with an fws volunteer nurse), fws will help prevent some of the primary health concerns of this developing country. Through partnerships with local health organisations, and by providing nourishment and comfortable, clean shelter, fws will help to prevent illness and death, plus educate orphans and the local community alike on important health issues.

**fws’ generation of sustainability**

For us, ‘sustainability’ involves these four areas:

1. **Organisational sustainability** – fws has a strong organisational base and a great deal of planning goes into our ventures. We stipulate that one of our core team must have in-country experience to ensure reliable contacts.

2. **Economic sustainability** – while our children’s village has been established with funding donated to fws, it will also investigate local trade options in order to generate financial independence.

3. **Social sustainability** – through our social learning program, fws ensures that Kesho Leo children are well-adjusted and skilled socially to prosper in the world. Our ‘interactive education’ program engenders our kids with the ability to earn a living and become another great asset to local society. fws employs locally.

4. **Ecological sustainability** – through the design of our children’s village, we aim to ensure that Kesho Leo doesn’t impact negatively on the environment around it, and indeed contributes positively to it.

### 2.5 fws team in Australia

**Kelsey Wilson** (fws Vice-President and Management Committee member)

**Shona Arneil** (fws Secretary and Management Committee member)

**Anne O’Donoghue** (fws Treasurer and Management Committee member)

**Ben Schwabe** (fws IT Manager) is a pilot and is also self-educated in IT. He looks after our website, keeping donors and sponsors up to date with all fws developments.

**Joe Ward** (fws Financial Strategist) is owner of TodayCorp, Asia-Pacific’s largest online learning, development and recruitment company. He continues to offer fws financial advice and consultation.

**Rob Watson** (fws Eco-architect) is the eco-conscious owner of Robert Watson Architects in Melbourne, with many years’ experience in award-winning design. His design for Kesho Leo children’s village is now coming to life in Tanzania.

**Cathy McQuade** (fws NSW Fundraising Coordinator) started with fws in Dec 07. She is a primary-school teacher and savvy mother of four, with many years’ experience in community fundraising. Now, fws is benefiting from her awesome skills.
Jenny McDonald (fw: Volunteer Coordinator) has worked for many years managing Human Resources for not-for-profit companies in Australia. She brings many skills essential for coordinating fw’s overseas volunteers.

Elizabeth Cause (fw: Acting Secretary and Legal Advisor) is a lawyer who fills in beautifully when our secretary, Shona, is in Tanzania. She is also quick to research any and all legalese answers that fw’s may need.

Craig Rudd (fw: Senior Accountant) started with us in Dec 07. He has many years’ experience heading up accounts teams for not-for-profit organisations in Australia. He not only keeps the books, but is streamlining the accounting systems for fw’s.

Amanda Pattison (PA to fw: President) started with fw’s in May 08. She is a commercial lawyer who brings high levels of efficiency and organisation to her work for fw’s. We feel her role will only grow!

Juliette Winter (fw: Publicity Officer) started with fw’s in Jan 06. She’s a freelance editor who likes to spread the word about fw’s, and manages all media queries.

Mel Austin (fw: Gratitude Officer)

2.6 fw’s team in Tanzania, East Africa

Mudi Salim (Kesho Leo Assistant Manager) is a husband and father who runs a successful small business in Arusha. He has been invaluable as an interpreter, supplies purchaser and assistant manager for fw’s during this building phase.

Lucas Mbaya (Kesho Leo Education Officer) is a tertiary-educated young man with an interest in international development. He has worked in refugee camps and now gives fw’s huge support as our education officer and interpreter.

Nolasco Mkawe (Village Elder and fw’s Advisor) is a family man and businessman. He’s been wonderful helping the fw’s team in Tanzania build and maintain good communication with their neighbours.

Paul Follas (Edmund Rice School Bursar) has lived and worked in the village of Sinon for the last 13 years. He is on the board of fw’s Tanzania and is a very helpful neighbour and mentor.

Frank O’Shea (Edmund Rice School Principal) is extremely knowledgeable about the local area and has been invaluable as a mentor and in helping fw’s settle into the community. Sadly for us, he left Tanzania in Jan 08 to move on to other projects.

Rebecka Delforce (fw’s President) moved to Tanzania in July 07, to be the on-site project manager, as well as continuing her role as President of fw’s Australia.

Shona Arneil (fw’s Secretary) brought her skills to Tanzania for five months this financial year. She did an incredible job of advertising, interviewing and hiring our house-mamas, as well as working with Rebecka to achieve NGO status in Tanzania.

Robert Cork (fw’s Environmental Advisor) is an environmental engineer with experience in developing countries. He worked for AUSTCARE in Cambodia during 06/07. ‘Corky’ joined our Tanzanian team in Oct 07 and has put his skills to
work by establishing the Kesho Leo farm, as well as leading the building of our volunteer village.

**Darren Stratti** (fws General Building Foreman) worked for many years as a building foreman, with 15 years’ experience in building structures from excavation up. Darren moved to Tanzania in July 07, with Rebecka, to lead the building of Kesho Leo. He did an incredible job of training unskilled labourers, and left us an inspiring legacy in Kesho Leo’s buildings. We tragically lost Darren in an armed robbery on June 30, 2008.

### 2.7 fws volunteers

fws operates entirely on the work of volunteers, both in Australia and overseas. We wish to acknowledge the exceptional efforts of all our volunteers this year, both in Australia and Tanzania.

**In Australia**

- Tracey Hartmann — fundraising
- Mark Bizeray — auditing services, gratis
- Elissa Wilson — grants
- Jan Purser — fundraising
- Leah Slater — grants
- Fran Hopley — fundraising
- Veronica Milanesi — fundraising
- Tania Paschen — fundraising
- Anna Scobie — *Gimme Shelter* subeditor
- Elinor McDonald — graphic designer
- Janine Moodley — fundraising support
- Jenna Green — fundraising
- Loretta Crombie — fundraising
- Clare Murray — fundraising
- Bruno — fws promotional video, gratis
- Lilith Kreuger — fundraising
- Rebecca Krings — fundraising
- Liz Henderson — fundraising
- Elise Tiedgen — fundraising
- Georgina Robertson — fundraising
- Megan Utter — fundraising
- Kate McGinness — fundraising
- Dione Rebbechi — fundraising
- Erika Henry — fundraising
- Jillian Hood — fundraising
- Natasha Redfern — fundraising
- Karen Champlin — fundraising
- Katie Isaac — fundraising
- Emily Morrison — fundraising, merchandise sales
- Sally Richardson — fundraising

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Overseas

Rebecka Delforce — project manager Jul 07-Jun 08
Darren Stratti — building foreman Jul 07-Jun 08
Jai — carpenter Aug-Oct 07
Blair — carpenter Aug-Oct 07
Shona Arneil — education/employment Oct 07-Jan 08
Robert Cork — environmental engineer Oct 07-Jun 08
Mark Bizeray — accounts Oct 07
Eamonn Cornish — building Nov 07
Brendan Jootsie — building Nov 07
Aaron Horrell — building Nov 07
Kelsey Wilson — staffing assistant/social welfare Nov 07-Jan 08
Ben Schwabe — handyman Nov 07-Jan 08
Jenna Green — social welfare Jan 08
Lilith Kreuger — admin support Jan-Mar 08
Nick Hirst — bursar and builder Jan-Dec 08
Heather Groat — nurse Jan-Dec 08
Warren Hopley — purchasing officer Jan-Mar 08
Clare Hopley — teacher Jan-Mar 08
Janelle Gibson — social welfare/education Jan 08-Feb 08
Rebecca Krings — admin/volunteer support Apr 08
Liz Astling — health Apr-Jun 08
Laura Holly — needs analysis May-Jun 08
Zoe Finnegan — needs analysis May-Jun 08
Georgina Gunson — volunteer village support May-Jun 08
Tas Masih — health Jun 08
Robbie Stratti — Feb-Dec 08
Allyce Mccrossen — Feb-June 08
Jul 07
- Rebecka Delforce (President) and Darren Stratti (Building Foreman) move to Tanzania. They begin fitting out the empty shell of our volunteer house to make it liveable as they begin a projected 12-month stint to build and manage the project.
- Funds are transferred to Tanzania to begin construction of Kesho Leo children’s village. Christian Brothers kindly allowed us to use their bank accounts until we opened our own (subject to NGO status in Tanzania).

Aug 07
- Building starts. Darren works closely with Mudi Salim (our Tanzanian Assistant Manager) to select labourers to employ on the building. These are all farmers from the local area, with little to no building experience. Darren will provide on-site skill training to all fundis (labourers), which will hopefully increase their future work opportunities.
- Rebecka purchases and establishes an internet connection on-site at the volunteer village in Tanzania, to enable effective communication between Tanzania and Australia.
- The City to Surf fundraiser is run by Jonathon Ireland, and raises $2090 through sponsorship pledges.
- Shona Arneil, Kelsey Wilson and Anne O’Donoghue hold a Management Committee meeting in Brisbane, prior to Shona heading to Tanzania. Work is begun on developing fws’ values.
- Jai and Blair (chippies) arrive from Australia, to support Darren with the building of Kesho Leo.

Sept 07
- Shona moves to Tanzania to volunteer for five months. She plans fws’ first ever Community Forum, to inform the community about fws and listen to their hopes and concerns. Shona also begins advertising the positions available for house-mamas.
- Perth Movie Night raises $1306 — thanks Jan Purser and Perth!
- Brisbane Movie Night raises $1125 — thanks Jenna Green and Brisbane!

Oct 07
- Corky (Robert Cork, fws Environmental Engineer) arrives in Tanzania and heads straight off to attend a three-week course in permaculture, in order to implement the knowledge at the Kesho Leo children’s village site.
- Mark Bizeray arrives in Tanzania to sort out the fws accounting systems there, much to everyone’s relief! He spends three weeks setting up simple spreadsheets that everyone finds user-friendly, but will still meet Australian reporting requirements — Mark’s the Biz!
- Applications are invited for house-mama positions. Posters are distributed all around the village, and interested candidates have until the Community Forum date to submit their applications.
Nov 07
- Sydney Little Day Out is held, with high-class music performers, a jumping castle, face painting and African hair braiding. There is awesome community support that enables $5579 to be raised. Thanks to all the fantastic, committed girls on the fundraising committee, and to all the musicians!
- First fws Community Forum is held and the interview process for house-mama candidates begins. An initial brief interview is held immediately, starting the extensive process of follow-up interviews and home visits to decide on the final group to be employed. Kelsey and Anne (while preparing for Little Day Out) talk on the phone to Shona and Rebecka (while running the forum) — it’s so exciting to be living the dream of fundraising turning into a real project, with tangible outcomes for a whole community!
- Melbourne Comedy Night raises $3712, with a highly entertaining night had by all, and including a snazzy fws video, thanks Bruno! And thanks to Lili and Becks for all the organising!
- fws becomes a Tanzanian NGO on November 16, after only a few months of extraordinarily hard work by Rebecka, Shona, Lucas (our Tanzanian interpreter) and the rest of the Tanzanian team, to tick every box required, wait in offices as long as necessary (often days), document meetings and fill in every form possible. Congratulations — fws Tanzania is born!

Dec 07
- Ben and Kelsey arrive at the volunteer village, to have a look-see before coming for their 12-month stint as Managers next year. They get to work straight away — Ben helping build more volunteer huts and Kelsey helping Shona conduct house-mama home visits, among other jobs.
- Now that fws has NGO status in Tanzania, we are able to open our own bank accounts in Tanzania. Kelsey does the honours this time, of the long waits in queues and extensive form-filling duties. Another HUGE step forward and money is immediately requested from Australia, to fatten up the Tanzanian accounts and make purchases for building much simpler and more efficient.
- Brisbane Christmas Art event is held by Jenna Green, and raises a lovely Christmas present of $500 for fws!
- Cathy McQuade is appointed NSW Fundraising Coordinator, and she launches straight into work, organising her first big event for March.
- Good Weekend does a feature story on giving and a profile on Anne is included, giving fws amazing exposure right before Christmas. Many, many people subsequently choose to donate to fws rather than buy Christmas presents — a beautiful gift that touches us all.

January 08
- 15 women are employed to be Kesho Leo house-mamas — training begins four afternoons a week and a small stipend is paid to each. Topics covered include health education, nutrition, information about fws and their role descriptions.
- Lessons for Kesho Leo kids (the house-mama’s children) begin on four afternoons a week, covering basic English and maths. Lessons are held under the tree beside the church, just outside the Kesho Leo site.
- Short-term volunteers arrive for their three-month stints, including Lili (admin assistance), Warren (purchasing officer) and Clare (teacher).
Long-term volunteers (for a year) arrive, namely Nick (bursar and building assistant) and Heather (nurse).

Feb 08
- Operating programs move into full swing at Kesho Leo, with regular lessons conducted and the house-mamas becoming more familiar with one another and the fws volunteers and management.
- In Australia, the 06/07 financial year audit is completed, and Craig Rudd takes charge of fws accounts, much to everyone’s excitement!

March 08
- Sydney Art Event is held at Sydney College of the Arts. Brilliantly organised by Cathy McQuade, it is held in stunning college grounds and features renowned and lesser-known artists, all of exceptional quality. The event raises a massive and greatly needed $55,559!

April 08
- Lili, Warren and Clare all return home to Australia, Clare leaving the children’s lessons in the very capable hands of Lucas. Lucas has been working closely with Clare and now takes over the running of the lessons himself, following Clare’s program.

May 08
- Melbourne Movie Night raises $2832, led by Natasha Redfern and our Kelsey — team Victoria is busy this year!
- Kelsey and Ben make preparations to head to Tanzania to take over the management of Kesho Leo in July.

June 08
- Brisbane ‘Dress for fws’ is a classy affair, run by a very classy lady, Tracey Hartmann. With everyone dressed to the nines in one of the most elegant rooms at Brisbane Town Hall, the atmosphere is warm and generous. The auction bidding is energetic, merchandise purchases are unstoppable and by the time the dancing kicks in, an incredible $20,117 has been raised!
- Kelsey, Anne and Shona gather in Brisbane, for the fundraiser and a final management committee meeting before Kelsey leaves the country. They also manage to squeeze in a photo shoot for an article that notebook: magazine is doing on fws. Lots of fun!
- On 30th June, 2008, the Kesho Leo volunteer village is robbed, and Darren Stratti is shot during the robbery. He dies later in hospital, and the lives of all involved with fws are forever changed.
Australian building foreman Darren Stratti, aged 36, gave his life on June 30, 2008, trying to protect the Kesho Leo children’s village project and its volunteers during an armed robbery at the fws volunteer village in Tanzania, East Africa.

Even before this last brave act, Darren had made many exceptional contributions during his four years volunteering with fws.

**In Australia**
- From fws’ earliest days, Darren was integral in forming policy and procedure around this small, new not-for-profit company that his girlfriend, Rebecka Delforce, founded and presided over. He even helped Rebecka come up with the name.
- Darren, a musician, donated his time and musical talent to support fws’ first music fundraisers, asking his musician friends and family to play, sing and sound-check at fws events.
- Darren supported Rebecka financially for two years, so that she could donate six whole days per week to fws in order to get the project off the ground.
- Darren flew to Africa, self-funded (as was all his fws work) with fws architect Robert Watson in April 2007 and personally surveyed the two sites that fws hoped to purchase, on which to build Kesho Leo children’s village.

**In Tanzania, East Africa:**
- Darren took unpaid leave from his day job to fly to Tanzania in July 08 to begin building Kesho Leo children’s village, leaving his two teenage sons at home in Australia.
- He employed 20 farmers as his ‘labourers’, and began an 11-month tuition program teaching them building skills as diverse as concrete pouring to carpentry. He treated all his labourers with respect and compassion, empowering them with skills to help them make a living.
- Darren donated his song, ‘Better Things’, to fws to enable it to promote its website video footage — eventually making that footage himself.
- Ultimately, Darren gave his life protecting the project and its volunteers, but Darren’s life also impacted heavily on those Tanzanians he worked with while in Sinon. Because of him, they were able to feed and medicate their children (via the wages he handed out each week). Because of him, they were able to repair doors to their huts or build their own children a bed (skills they didn’t have when Darren arrived). To this day, both the Australian volunteers and the Tanzanian community Darren worked with see him as an inspirational volunteer — one who gave selflessly, and truly enjoyed doing so.

fws will be forever grateful to Darren for his hard work, dedication and the legacy he has left behind, not only in the Kesho Leo building he almost completed, but in the respect his Tanzanian workers have for him, the love with which they remember him, and the bright new futures of the people of this village, which Darren played a huge part in enabling.

Thank you, Darren, we will miss you always.
This has been another year of great change and development in the financial world of fws. During the second half of 2007, the volume of work created by such awesome fundraisers as Kujenga Sydney (June 07), Melbourne Trivia Night (Oct 07), Melbourne Comedy Night (Nov 07) and Sydney Little Day Out (Nov 07) meant that a qualified accountant was becoming absolutely essential. Also, fws had ventured forth into the building phase of Kesho Leo, meaning that we now had accounts to manage across two countries.

So, in November 2007, Mark Bizeray and I started the hunt for a volunteer accountant. December 2007 saw us welcome Craig Rudd on board as fws Senior Accountant. With years of experience managing accounts teams for NGOs in Australia, Craig was invaluable in making sure our systems complied with reporting requirements in all states. He also rebuilt our accounting systems to allow for growth in the organisation, and worked with the Kesho Leo crew to marry the two systems, so that our Australian accounts clearly show the whole journey of all funds donated.

Another crucial contribution was Mark’s work in Tanzania in late 07. He set up user-friendly spreadsheets so that Kesho Leo’s management staff and volunteers could record all expenditure and the information could easily be sent back to Australia for reporting purposes.

Also, we achieved NGO status in Tanzania in November, thanks to extraordinary efforts and patience on the part of our Kesho Leo crew. We opened our Tanzanian bank accounts in December 07, allowing for easier flow of funds and therefore more rapid growth of the project.

December 2007 also saw Cathy McQuade come on board as NSW Fundraising Manager. She got stuck straight in, organising the classiest art event on Sydney’s 2008 calendar, and raising over $55,000 net profit! fws family and friends again outdid themselves in Brisbane, with Tracey Hartmann (cousin to Shona and femme extraordinaire) putting on another high-class do – a ball titled ‘Dress for fws’. It raised a mammoth $20K+!

Other successes include another year of very low administration costs – a meagre 10%! We are very proud of this achievement, as it means 90% of donated money is going directly to the project. We now have 13 monthly donors (always need more!), while in 07-08 our member base grew from 65 to 87.

As at June 30, 2008, the main areas needed to be worked on are simplifying procedures to speed up the receipting process, developing a fundraisers’ pack, helping all volunteers follow protocol, and ensuring that records are kept in a uniform way.

From a Treasurer’s point of view, this financial year was absolutely thrilling – not to mention crazy busy. Which is all as it should be for a successful NGO. Lots of money was raised by a growing community of volunteers. And at the same time, lots of money was purposefully spent, with the most wonderfully tangible, and life changing, results in the village of Sinon, Tanzania.

* Anne O’Donoghue, Treasurer, fws

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