



CHILDWORLD

Summer 07

Felix spent 18 months as a 'night commuter'; travelling to the guarded town of Gulu with other children, to avoid abduction by the rebel army in Uganda

Child soldiers in Uganda return home

For over 20 years, children in northern Uganda have been the victims of an armed rebellion against the government, with an estimated 20,000 children kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army to serve as child soldiers and slaves.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by rebel Joseph Kony, has been fighting to overthrow the Ugandan Government since 1986. Families living in northern Uganda have been the victims of mutilation, rape and murder; villages have been looted and destroyed; and thousands of women and children abducted and forced to join the rebel army.

ChildFund Australia CEO Nigel Spence says: "Children have been taken from their homes, schools and villages at gunpoint during LRA raids and forced to take part in attacks - sometimes on their own villages and families.

"To avoid abduction, thousands of children have been forced to commute from their villages to hide in forests, hospitals and churches."

Both boys and girls are abducted by the LRA. It is estimated that girls make up one-third of child soldiers in Uganda, many of whom are tortured or forced to become sex slaves for senior LRA figures. The ongoing fighting has led to a major humanitarian crisis with tens of thousands of Ugandans killed and more than 1.7 million forced to flee their homes to live in camps.

Those choosing to escape their rural villages often make their bid for safety in the middle of the night as they try to avoid becoming the target of rebel attack or abducted themselves.

With a truce signed last year, and peace talks currently under way, many child soldiers are now returning to their homes, having missed out on their education, family life and the innocence of childhood. To assist these children, ChildFund has launched a new Child Abduction Relief program, which will train community members in child rights and conflict resolution so that they can help former child soldiers reintegrate with their communities.

Helping older children to develop income-generation skills is also a priority, as the war has left behind many children and young people who have lost one or both of their parents or carers. ChildFund will establish apprenticeships where vocational skills can be learned, and provide agricultural equipment to families taking care of children affected by the conflict.

"Recovering from such an ordeal would be difficult enough if these children had access

to the assistance and opportunities that we enjoy in Australia," says Nigel. "But imagine the difficulties these children face in a country ravaged by war, where poverty and hunger are widespread, and economic opportunities are few.

"It is vital that these children receive the care, support and community reintegration that is so essential to surviving such an emotionally horrific ordeal."

Child soldiers: a global crisis

- On average, child soldiers are aged 6-18 years.
- Since 2001, child soldiers have participated in 21 wars.
- There are an estimated 200,000-300,000 child soldiers globally, many of whom are abducted and forced to serve.
- Child soldiers serve for both rebel armies and government forces.

Support for Cambodia



With a newly established office in Phnom Penh, ChildFund Australia will begin community development programs among children and their families in Cambodia later this year.

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world with gross domestic product (GDP) per capita around US\$300 (compared with Australia's GDP per capita of approximately US\$31,000).

It also has some of the lowest social indicators in Asia, such as the highest maternal mortality, child under five mortality and infant mortality rates.

Cambodia has a long history of civil unrest, including a military coup in 1970 and the genocide committed by the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979, which saw an estimated 1.8 million Cambodians brutally murdered. This ongoing instability has contributed significantly to Cambodia's poverty with GDP per capita remaining essentially the same since 1969.

Over a third of Cambodians are currently living below the poverty line and, despite improving conditions, two-thirds of the population do not have access to clean water.

More than 85 per cent live in rural areas but greater numbers are expected to migrate to urban centres in search of

work in the coming years. Children, who make up 50 per cent of the population, are particularly vulnerable in Cambodia. Half of all children are malnourished and one in 12 Cambodian children dies before reaching the age of five.

The majority of these deaths are in their first year of life, as communities struggle to access appropriate healthcare and immunisation programs.

The high maternal mortality rate is also of great concern – for every 100,000 live births, 472 mothers lose their lives (compared with just eight in Australia), mostly because one-third of women giving birth do not have access to any medical assistance.

The HIV/AIDS infection rate in Cambodia has plateaued in recent years, however communities face difficulties caring for those already infected who are now becoming ill, developing AIDS and dying.

As one of Asia's poorest countries, the expansion of ChildFund Australia's community development programs in Cambodia will focus on improving the lives of children and their families.

The new country director of ChildFund Cambodia, Carol Mortensen, is currently working with local communities to determine the most pressing needs and specific programs in the key priority areas (access to education, healthcare and clean water) will commence in 2008.

Cambodia at a glance

- Cambodia is an agricultural country in South-East Asia.
- Population: approximately 14 million.
- Cambodia is currently ruled by a constitutional democracy.
- Main industries: garment, tourism and construction sectors.
- Seventy-three per cent of Cambodians aged over 15 can read and write.
- The average household contains five people.
- 2.2 million children live in poverty.
- Over 85,000 children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- Only 53 per cent of all children complete their primary schooling.

From the CEO

Dear ChildFund supporters,

Recently the United Nations (UN) released new figures showing that the number of annual child deaths worldwide has fallen below the 10 million mark for the first time. This reduction in mortality rates is largely attributed to health campaigns focused on measles and malaria, as well as the promotion of exclusive breast-feeding.

The figures are encouraging as they demonstrate that real progress is being made to reduce child deaths even as populations rise. Determined action and simple initiatives such as measles immunisation, distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria, provision of clean water and community education about the benefits of exclusive breast-feeding are improving child survival rates.

However the challenges are still immense. Most of the 9.7 million child deaths annually are due to preventable diseases. We would be appalled to discover that an Australian child's life had ended prematurely as a result of diarrhoea or chickenpox, yet this is the reality for children around the world.

While dramatic progress is being made in some countries, many still lag behind and within many Asian and African countries child mortality rates in poorer rural areas are unchanged. The spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa, has added to the challenge.

You will find included with this issue of Childworld our most recent annual report. I am very pleased to confirm that during the last financial year support has increased with the number of sponsored children growing to over 52,000. We hope to see this number increase even more in the year ahead as we begin operations in Cambodia.

I would like to thank our donors and sponsors for their committed support – with your continued efforts we are now seeing tangible improvements (as confirmed by the UN), in the lives of thousands of children around the world.

Nigel Spence
CEO, ChildFund Australia

A good breeding season for ducks in PNG

By giving rural communities in Papua New Guinea the opportunity to learn new agricultural techniques, families can increase their incomes and provide their children with a healthier diet.

ChildFund works in partnership with more than thirty rural villages within the Central and Gulf Provinces of PNG. Our community development approach is one that respects the diverse culture and actively incorporates the traditional knowledge and methodologies of local people.

Food security and livelihood program officer Michael Kaugam recently put this philosophy into practice, when he delivered a Basic Farming Skills training program to committed community members of Imairu village in Ormand Program Area, Central Province (located approximately three hours south-east of Port Moresby).

Conducted over two weeks, the program focused on sustainability and encouraged community members to take responsibility for ongoing, effective and productive farming practices. Training included livestock rearing (Muscovy ducks) and an introduction to vegetable gardening skills. Muscovy ducks are selected because they are robust (suitable to a tropical environment) and prolific in that they have up to five breeding seasons each year.

Additionally, Muscovy ducks are cheap to feed, eating any local food or foraging for green leaves or insects. Where many other breeds require ready access to water for breeding, Muscovies require water only for drinking.

Michael's livestock training included building a duck house and general husbandry topics

such as daily care, diet and common diseases. As high protein starter feed is expensive, he encouraged farmers to prepare their own pumpkin, beans and fruits as a healthy, nourishing and affordable alternative for the ducks.

Particular attention was paid to providing egg cages as a secure place for laying, and the care of young birds — especially separating the ducklings from the mother to the brooding area as soon as they have hatched to give them their best chance for strong growth in a safe environment.

A delighted Michael reported that 24 recently acquired Muscovy ducks laid 76 eggs in the newly constructed egg cages during the two weeks training. What better incentive to the trainees! Seven modules of practical and beneficial training in sustainable gardening practices were also delivered to both women and men in the community.

This training included:

- the construction of seed boxes from local timber;
- making seed cups from banana stems;
- mulching and composting;
- utilising legume crops to enrich the soil as well as to provide protein rich food;
- caring for seedlings in the nursery and garden plots (weeding, watering, removing diseased plants and applying chicken manure); and
- producing non chemical insecticide from a combination of the seeds of Neem trees, a species introduced to PNG from India, and chilli seeds.

Over the coming months, Michael will provide ongoing support with both the duck raising and garden plots with a view to building the capacity of the community to become self-reliant in these two important enterprises.



Safety education: children take the lead



Today seventeen year-old Ly Thi Duc will give a talk on drowning. Duc is a child-to-child facilitator in a Children's Club in Vietnam.

Duc (pictured) looks comfortable and confident in front of her club and starts with a question: "Hi my friends, do you often go swimming

in the stream?" She asks additional questions to find out how much her friends know about the dangers of swimming in a stream without adult supervision; especially when they can't swim.

Some answer: "I can't swim but I still go there because going with the group is so much fun." A little boy in a red cap says loudly in a cheeky voice: "I like jumping into the stream from the bridge. I'm not afraid; living or dying is a fate." The whole group laughs. Then a girl stands up and says seriously: "I don't think it is a fate. I think it is very dangerous when you swim especially after a heavy rain."

The discussion continues and after 15 minutes, the whole club agrees about the dangers of drowning, and goes on to discuss ways to prevent it from happening. Training like this is scheduled once a week. Before the club

was opened, Duc and three other children participated in ChildFund-supported courses on facilitating skills, child injury prevention, traffic laws and life skills.

Seven year-old Lien says: "I have joined three lessons so far. I like these sessions very much." Twelve year-old Hua Van adds: "I like my club because I can play sports here. I also like these lessons. I found the lesson about burns is very useful."

After two years of piloting the program, Children's Clubs have been rolled out in eight communes, attracting around 5,000 children. Beside educational sessions and recreational activities such as reading books and playing sports, children also come to the club to study and plan community activities such as helping the elderly, cleaning the village and planting trees.

The clubs attest to the creative management skills and capability of children to organise themselves. Children have established their own management board and selected members to coordinate activities. ChildFund plays a supporting role in all stages to give children the best knowledge and leadership skills, and provide access to resources.

Children's clubs not only provide a useful and interesting playground for children in rural areas, but also create a channel for them to actively contribute to their community.

Bui Thi Beo, a 76 year old Muong ethnic woman, said about her hamlet club's children. "I can't find words to say thanks to the little kids. They help me with a lot and it makes such an old person like me feel very happy. I believe they will become good people."

ChildFund aro

ChildFund International works where aid is able to flow, implementing community development programs in 55 countries.



Indonesia: a place to learn

In Jakarta, many young people are forced to leave school early to find jobs and contribute to family incomes. Some look after younger siblings while their mothers work, while others are employed by local factories, manage street kiosks or run motorcycle taxi services.

Now, youth are able to restart their studies at a night school operated by ChildFund. The school is open for three hours each evening, as well as Saturdays and Sundays, giving both children and young adults the chance to gain the school diplomas they have missed out on. Students and families contribute a small fee to cover transportation and examination costs, while Childfund pays the salaries of trained teachers.

For young people, the school gives them the chance to find better jobs, earn higher wages, and even the chance to attend university.



Afghanistan: a family affair

Twenty-two year-old Barfak (pictured third from left) and her family returned home to Afghanistan, after living as refugees in Pakistan, only to find it had been badly damaged by the war. With no money available to make the repairs, Barfak began a vocational training course offered by ChildFund.

After completing the course, ChildFund gave Barfak a sewing machine and work table, as well as a loan of \$85 to buy cloth. Within a month she had earned \$60, allowing her to take out another loan to buy an additional sewing machine for her two younger sisters to use.

Today, Barfak and her sisters are helping to pay the family's expenses, as well as covering the school expenses for their younger siblings. They have been saving money and will soon be in a position to begin repairing their damaged home.



Kenya: hope for the future

Four year-old William (pictured) is already living with the debilitating impact of HIV. While he is currently receiving anti-retroviral drug treatment, William gets ill more frequently than his four older brothers and sisters, who were born before William's parents contracted the virus.

William's parents Jane and John are now members of the Star of Hope support group, established by ChildFund. The group meets on a regular basis to discuss the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS – overcoming the stigma; paying for medications; eating a healthy diet; and generating an income to support themselves.

Jane has also received ChildFund training in "mother mentoring", since the family adopted the orphaned daughter of family friends who died of an HIV/AIDS-related illness. Mother mentors are taught care-giving skills that focus on good nutrition and support the wellbeing of children.

These women also learn to promote positive interactions between caregivers and young children. By helping others, Jane says she learns important lessons that help her care for her own family.

With six children to support, family finances have been strained, but ChildFund is helping Jane and John to support their children by covering school fees and some additional expenses.

While William faces many challenges ahead, he is much like any other four year-old boy – he laughs and sings often, and enjoys playing with other children. With the support of ChildFund, and the active involvement of parents like Jane and other members of the community, there is hope that new drugs, better nutrition and greater public understanding will lead to a brighter future for all those affected by HIV/AIDS.

und the globe

ChildFund Australia thanks its supporters and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).



Americas: hurricane update

In August and September, a number of countries in South America have been the victims of three separate hurricanes: Dean, Henriette and Felix.

In Guatemala and Honduras, children and their families in ChildFund program areas have been lucky enough to escape unharmed, with no major damage or injury recorded.

Unfortunately, for families living in the state of Puebla in Mexico, structural damage has occurred as a result of Hurricane Dean (pictured), and many crops have been damaged. To date, around 200 families have suffered damage to their homes, and ChildFund is now providing materials for housing reconstruction, in conjunction with community organisations and the local government. Fortunately, there have been no reported physical injuries or loss of life.



Uganda: children sleep safe

As the sun sets over the displaced persons camp in Lira, in northern Uganda, mosquito activity is at its worst, and the makeshift shelters provide little protection for children. ChildFund has joined with the Research Triangle Institute to distribute over 11,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets within the camps. Since their distribution, malaria cases have fallen dramatically.

Treated bed nets cost around \$12 and are an extremely cost effective method of preventing the disease. Access to early diagnosis, antimalarial drugs and education also reduce the needless deaths of many children, so ChildFund has also established a training program for volunteers (pictured) on how to educate their communities about malaria prevention and treatment.



Guatemala: a birthday treat

ChildFund's birthday card service was launched earlier this year, and gives you the chance to send your sponsored child a personalised birthday card, complete with an Australian themed puzzle. Once you've added your own message, ChildFund sends your card to your sponsored child in time for their special day, meaning you don't need to worry about postage, translation and correct addressing.

For children living in poor rural communities in Guatemala, receiving a colourful birthday card from an overseas sponsor is a real treat, and one that helps make your sponsored child's day all the more memorable. Children who have already received birthday cards, like 10 year-old Irma (pictured), appreciate receiving a personal message from their sponsor in Australia. As Irma said: "El gracioso cangurito ha alegrado mi cumpleaños (the funny kangaroo made my birthday happy)!"



Sri Lanka: child protection

With funding support from UNICEF, ChildFund has established a Child Protection Diploma Program in Sri Lanka. This will teach locally-based child protection officers how to support the many children who lost one or both of their parents during the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004.

The program will collaborate with many sectors of the Sri Lankan government including the Ministry of Child Development, Department of Probation and Child Care Services.

These groups will enforce the procedures needed for tracing, reunification and casework services for vulnerable children and families, with the one-year diploma now being recognised as a national award for Child Protection Officers.

Meeting the photos

Visiting your sponsored child can be a wonderful experience and a great way to discover how ChildFund Australia's programs improve day-to-day life for children and their communities. Here, two Australian sponsors recount their trips.



Does child sponsorship really make a difference? To find out, Jeremy Healey travelled to Ethiopia to meet his sponsored child Bedlu.

The ChildFund staff in Ethiopia were very accommodating, especially Terefe Sisay, who accompanied us on our visit, and Genet and Alem at the national office who coordinated everything.

We arrived at Deбри Berhan at around 10am, where we were met by Terefe. Deбри Berhan is 130kms north of Addis Ababa and is where Bedlu boards and attends school during the week (going home on weekends).

Our first stop was Deбри Berhan Adventist School. The grounds of the school were quite bare, but all the students had a wave and a welcoming smile for us. At first I could not see Bedlu among the other students and only recognised him when he walked over to us with his principal. He was initially quite shy and let his principal do most of the talking.

New classrooms are currently being constructed with the assistance of ChildFund, so I could see the impact my sponsorship was making to the community straight away.

We were invited to meet some of the students and, after some prompting from their teacher, the questions began to flow. Most wanted to know about life in Australia, the country itself and the animals, especially kangaroos.

After leaving the school, we headed to the North Shoa coordination office. Here we were met by Endale Assefa the project coordinator. Endale took us through the project's history and outlined the many plans for the future. This was a surprisingly rewarding part of the day, to see my contributions being put to such good use and to see with my own eyes the passion and dedication the staff have for their work.

We then drove on to Bedlu's community in Keyit, some 15kms from his school. I was overcome with how welcoming his family were, given their humble life. Bedlu's grandmother welcomed us with hugs and blessings, as did the other family members. We immediately felt like part of the family.

Spending an hour with the family was very special, with each of us learning a bit more about each other and enjoying a few laughs. We were also treated to some impromptu dancing followed by much laughter.

Unfortunately, our day had to come to an end around 3pm and, after driving back to Deбри Berhan, we said farewell to Bedlu. After 14

years of sponsoring Bedlu this was a hard moment to shake hands and say goodbye after just a few hours. I felt, however, that both of us know each other so much better because of this day and look forward to our next letters.

To know that my sponsorship has assisted that cute little two-year-old with a Mohawk haircut and a tear on his cheek to grow into a polite and handsome young man facing a brighter and prosperous future was incredibly rewarding.

The following day we went to the National office in Addis Ababa to meet the staff. Genet and Alem showed us around and I saw what happens to the correspondence letters and other procedures within the office. We had the opportunity to meet the national director and other staff whom were all very welcoming. I commend them all on their great work.

Going to Ethiopia and meeting Bedlu and his family has been one of the highlights of my life and something I would highly recommend to other sponsors.

Does my contribution really make a difference? Throughout the last 14 years many people have asked me this same question, and until my visit I could only say I hope so. After my visit, I can answer them all quite confidently with yes.

Sponsoring a child can mean more than just receiving a letter once every few months. As Alice England and her mother Sue recently discovered, it can also mean a once in a lifetime opportunity to spend six weeks in Africa.

Alice has been sponsoring 13 year-old Piraton in Kenya for the past five years through ChildFund Australia. Last year, she and her mum decided to travel to Kenya so that they could meet Piraton in person.

Alice said: "My mum and I had an incredible six weeks in Africa but undoubtedly the most rewarding and overwhelming day was visiting Naning'oi Girls School in Kenya. It was a long five and half hour drive to get there, sometimes on non-existent roads, but the reception we received made it all worthwhile. The people were so welcoming and genuinely excited to see us that it was very touching. Piraton's father had walked for a few days just to come and meet us."

While at the school, older pupils performed a traditional dance for Alice and her mother, followed by Alice presenting Piraton and the school with some gifts – including the Australian classic childhood story *Possum Magic*.

"I hadn't even been sure that they would know we were coming and that was the biggest, most ridiculous silly thought I've ever had! Their generosity, particularly given they have so little, was incredible," said Alice.

After lunch, Alice and her mother visited a nearby village where Piraton stays if she can't get home during the holidays (because of floods). Alice said: "Again, the reception was overwhelming – dancing, presents and meals prepared for us."

During their visit, Alice and her mother were accompanied by ChildFund staff in Kenya, who were able to update them on development initiatives in the areas of healthcare, education, food security, water and HIV/AIDS. Alice said: "The whole day was spectacular and we were so impressed by the integrity of ChildFund. We were also invited to visit the head office in Nairobi and that gave us a great insight into how things run."



A new face online for ChildFund Australia

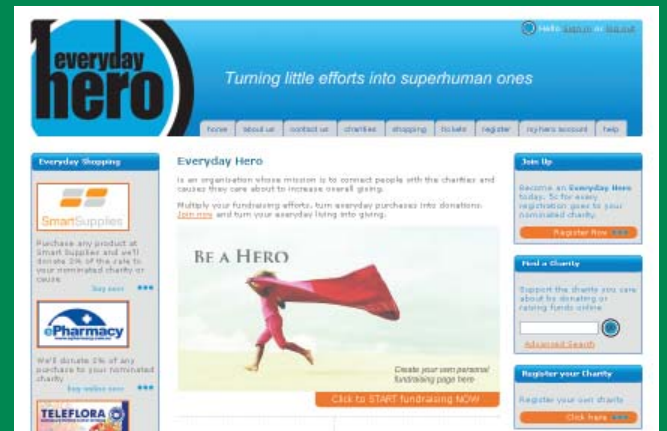


ChildFund Australia is pleased to announce that we have revamped our website, making it even easier for people to learn about our community development work around the world.

The new site includes the travel stories from our supporters who have recently journeyed across the globe to visit their sponsored children, as well as regular updates on Project Humanity programs, and how your donations to our latest appeal are being used for the benefit of children and their families.

In our Hot Topics section, ChildFund will include informative articles on the issues currently impacting children in developing countries, and our Program in Focus page will examine in detail our latest initiatives in the field.

If you have your own website, we would also be very grateful if you could help us attract new supporters by hosting a ChildFund banner or text link on your site. If you can offer a helping hand online, please get in touch with our communications team by emailing info@childfund.org.au or calling us on 1800 023 600.



Become an Everyday Hero!

Have you come up with a great fundraising idea? Why not get creative and get online?

We have now made it much easier for ChildFund supporters to run their fundraising activities online by partnering with www.everydayhero.com.au. This great website allows you to create your own personalised fundraising page, where you can include photos, stories or even a short video. Then all you need to do is get your friends and family involved – via the website you can send out emails that will direct them to your fundraising page. It is so simple and lots of fun.

Thank you for your online support! Your commitment and generosity is greatly appreciated by ChildFund Australia and the children and communities with whom we work.

Give a gift with a difference

ChildFund Australia is about to launch its new Donations with a Difference catalogue – perfect Christmas gifts for you, and items that bring real and lasting change to the lives of children and their families living in poverty

NUTRITION



How it works

Many of the world's poorest people survive on just one dollar a day, and are trapped in the cycle of poverty.

At ChildFund Australia, we listen to children and families in developing countries to discover what they need the most, so that we can set them on the path to self-sufficiency and independence.

We then include these items in our annual gift catalogue, which can be purchased as unique presents for your friends and family.

Once you make a selection, ChildFund will deliver the items you have chosen to the communities that really need them.

For every donation you make, we will also provide you with a gift card. You can give these to your loved ones, telling them of the gift you have bought on their behalf. Each donation is also tax deductible, and we will send you a receipt for your purchase.

How it benefits communities

Chamil and his family live below the poverty line in Sri Lanka. Due to the effects of his

EDUCATION



chronic diabetes, Chamil's father is unable to work, and Chamil's mother struggled to make ends meet by working in a quarry, breaking up rocks.

But thanks to the generosity of a ChildFund supporter, Chamil's family received the gift of 10 baby chickens. When the baby chicks reach the age of six months, they will be able to produce around 550 eggs a month – which gives the family enough eggs to eat, sell at the market, and hatch to produce more chickens.

This additional income is enough to pay for Chamil's schooling, which will enable him to break the cycle of poverty.

How to find your perfect gift

ChildFund has identified 32 gifts that will make a lasting difference to the lives of families around the world. These items have been grouped into the following categories:

Animals: farmyard animals like pigs, goats and sheep provide food, income and the ability to raise more animals for the future.

Education: one of the best ways to help a child in the developing world is to give them

INCOME



an education, by providing them with the chance to go to school and the tools to help them learn.

Nutrition: malnutrition stunts growth, reduces concentration and can cause irreversible damage to children's health, so give seeds or even an orchard to keep kids healthy.

Income generation: a small loan or new vocational skills can help families generate a new income stream and help them pay for the basic necessities of life such as food, medicine and education.

Health: health and safety items, such as treated mosquito nets and first aid kits, can really mean the difference between life and death in developing communities.

Life changers: building a new borehole or establishing a village bank can bring enormous benefits to not just one family but a whole community.

To buy these gifts in time for Christmas, please visit our secure, online catalogue at www.donations.com.au/childfund

ChildFund Australia

Working in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting and meaningful change by supporting long-term community development and promoting children's rights

Level 8, 162 Goulburn Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
P: 1800 023 600
E: info@childfund.org.au
W: www.childfund.org.au



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For more information, please contact ACFID:
(02) 6285 1816 | main@acfid.asn.au | www.acfid.asn.au