

# CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#164 | WINTER 2021



The Emergencies Edition

## SURVIVING AND THRIVING BEYOND THE CRISIS

### COVID-19 SURGES:

How your support drives resilience in Papua New Guinea and India

### OVERCOMING THE FLOODS:

Timor-Leste and Indonesia recovering and rebuilding

### INDIGENOUS BACK BURNING:

First Australian led fire prevention

### LOCAL GIVING:

Project Compassion makes a global impact



Caritas  
AUSTRALIA

End poverty  
Promote justice  
Uphold dignity

# THANK YOU

As I write this letter, the shocking pictures and footage coming out of India, which is battling a massive surge in COVID-19 cases, loom large in my mind. It has been deeply saddening to see and hear reports of hospitals having to turn patients away. These reports are common across Asia, where vaccine and ventilator shortages have left vulnerable people in a dire situation.

It makes for a tough year for many of our neighbours, dealing with the pandemic on top of increasingly regular and ferocious weather events. Earlier this year, Tropical Cyclone Seroja killed over 180 people in Indonesia and 45 people in Timor-Leste, destroying essential infrastructure and leaving thousands homeless across both countries. All this after Cyclone Ana tore through Fiji's northern islands in February, displacing over 14,000 people.

Caritas Australia is a beacon of light – through your support and our local church networks and partners, we are able to support in building resilience in the most vulnerable communities so they can better prepare for emergencies.

By prioritising community development programs, we can strengthen communities before the emergency strikes, as well as help them to recover better afterwards. In Timor-Leste and Indonesia, emergency water, food and sanitation provide relief for communities immediately, whilst sustainable agriculture programs enhance resilience in the long-term.

I'd like to thank Catholic Health Australia and its members for partnering with us at this urgent time. To rise to the pressing challenge in Papua New Guinea, our two agencies are working together, leveraging our networks to get essential Personal Protective Equipment to 1,462 health workers and 247 healthcare facilities across the nation.

This issue of Caritas News highlights these kinds of solutions, which are only made possible through your generosity. Thank you for your unwavering support, before, during and after the emergency strikes.



With gratitude,

*Kirsty Robertson*

**Kirsty Robertson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Caritas Australia

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 Project Compassion is an important part of Caritas Australia's work to empower the most vulnerable members of our global family. Thank you for your support this year to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity all over the world.

*In the last edition of Caritas News, we noted the \$500 million raised for the work of social justice globally by Caritas Australia's supporters. The figure is the cumulative result of public donations as well as Government funding.*

**Writer/Editor:** Daniel Nour  
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**Cover:** In India, your support is empowering communities with poor healthcare systems with the essential personal protective equipment needed to save lives. Photo: Caritas India.  
**All photos belong to Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated**

GLOBAL EMERGENCIES

# CARITAS IN THE LOOP



## A MINISTERIAL VISIT TO CARITAS AUSTRALIA OFFICE



The Hon Zed Seselja visited Caritas Australia's Head Office in Sydney earlier this year. Photo: Daniel Nour.

We were thrilled to have the Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, visit our Alexandria office.

During his time in the office, the Minister learned about our programs in the Pacific and Asia, and voiced his support for Caritas Australia's investment in the development of our nearest neighbours.

It was wonderful to hear of the minister's long personal involvement in the work of Caritas Australia.

*"Caritas Australia has been a part of my life for a long time. What I love about Caritas is how it generates a grassroots movement in which millions of people are able to put in a few dollars, or more, and they can trust that Caritas Australia will use it for good."*



In Bangladesh, midwives offer essential medical care to vulnerable women such as Salma. Photo: Caritas Bangladesh.

## INDIGENOUS CARBON ECONOMIES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

For Reconciliation Week 2021, we celebrate one of our First Australian partners and their innovation during challenging times.

The Aboriginal Carbon Foundation supports carbon farming projects to help protect environmental, social and cultural values.

To reduce damaging bushfires, rangers and Traditional Owners generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) through the savanna burning methodology. 'Cool burns' at the beginning of the dry season reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The ACCU generated can be sold to companies who want to be carbon neutral, address their Reconciliation Action Plan and corporate social responsibility goals.

*"The rangers and Traditional Owners are very proud of the work that they're doing in terms of looking after country, but also knowing that it's a viable carbon economy,"* says Rowan Foley, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation.

Visit [www.caritas.org.au/firstaustralians](http://www.caritas.org.au/firstaustralians) to find out more, today!



Rangers conduct controlled back burning as part of the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation's fire prevention measures. Photo: Aboriginal Carbon Foundation.

## FORGING A WAY THROUGH FLOODS, A PANDEMIC AND CONFLICT

Simultaneous crises, including an unprecedented global pandemic, flooding and cyclones have left vulnerable people in dire straits. In this magazine, you'll learn about how your support builds resilience in communities before, during and after the emergency strikes.

Thank you for standing with us.

RAISING YOUR VOICE FOR  
MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

# HAVE YOUR SAY

“ I use a Project Compassion box to remind me that people matter.  
- Thomas Horgan

Dear Thomas,  
The Project Compassion box is the 'little box that makes big change.' Thank you for bearing witness to the place of the PC box in our lives and communities.  
- Caritas Australia

“ Sending prayers for those impacted by floods in the Northern Territory & Timor Leste  
- Cristelia Da Costa Duffy

Dear Cristelia,  
Thank you for your support of Caritas Australia's work to empower communities in Timor-Leste, with essential medical equipment and support.  
- Caritas Australia

“ I would like to know if Caritas is doing anything in India to send money/ equipment there to help with COVID-19?  
- Margie Beck

Dear Margie,  
The kindness of our generous supporters is enabling our partners on the ground, including Caritas India, to bolster community resilience against COVID-19. You can find out more at [www.caritas.org.au/support-india](http://www.caritas.org.au/support-india)  
-Caritas Australia



Mangrove plantations in Kiribati are improving community readiness by bolstering low-lying areas up against the threat of flooding. Photo: Boore Moua, Caritas Australia.

## Leave a legacy of love

When you include a gift in your Will, you create a life-changing legacy which can help transform the world for generations to come. Your gift will go towards the communities who need it. Thank you for leaving an enduring Legacy of Love.

[www.caritas.org.au/gift-in-will](http://www.caritas.org.au/gift-in-will)



Awareness raising of COVID-19 prevention strategies across India is saving lives. Photo: Caritas India.



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES WITH RESILIENCE MASSIVE COVID-19 SURGE ACROSS INDIA

A COVID-19 crisis is still unfolding in India with more than 29 million recorded cases and over 340,000 deaths.

The country of nearly 1.4 billion people currently contracts over 100,000 cases per day, although experts warn that actual numbers could be five to ten times higher than those reported.

“People are flooding hospitals, the hospitals have no beds and people are just dying. We are distressed and worried as we see in front of our eyes hundreds of our own near and dear ones dying or not getting a place in the hospitals,” said Fr Paul Moonjely, the Executive Director of Caritas India.

“We are equally worried about the protection and safety of our health workers.”

The enormous second wave has had a devastating impact on India's healthcare system, with widespread shortages of hospital beds and oxygen.

Vaccine registrations opened to adults; however, vaccines are also

in short supply due to shortages of materials and a slowdown in manufacturing.

“Now, more than ever, it's vital that we provide support to India to prevent even more lives being lost,” said Bernice Sarpong, Caritas Australia's Emergency Program Coordinator for Asia.

“We are working with our local partner, Carita India, to support marginalised communities to prevent the spread of the virus and also educating on how to look after loved ones with COVID-19 at home, while the

healthcare system is overwhelmed.”

Through your support of our India COVID-19 Appeal, Caritas Australia has been able to help Caritas India with:

- Information and treatment centres that provide isolation during quarantine,
- Ongoing awareness raising in communities hardest hit,
- Support to families to care for their loved ones at home, with so few places at public hospitals.



Visit [www.caritas.org.au/support-india](http://www.caritas.org.au/support-india) today!



CYCLONE SEASON UPENDS LIFE FOR OUR NEAREST NEIGHBOURS

# DISASTER IN OUR REGION

Cyclone season, which occurs between October and May, swept through Timor-Leste and Indonesia with incredible force this year. Cyclones often damage communities in South-East Asia and the Pacific, but now the COVID-19 pandemic has added an additional stress to already pressured communities.

Your support helps build resilience in vulnerable communities so that they can better prepare for extreme weather events, through building improved infrastructure and socialising emergency response action plans.



Driver, Vitorino Sarmento, is part of Caritas Australia's first response team in Timor-Leste. Photo: Caritas Australia

Timor-Leste is one of the least developed countries in our region, with 42% of the population living below the national poverty line (World Bank).

## TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste is still reeling in the wake of massive floods which were triggered by Tropical Cyclone Seroja in early April.

An estimated 2,000 households and over 9,000 people across Timor-Leste were affected. The torrential rain and landslides destroyed critical infrastructure across the country and claimed the lives of 45 people.

Some of the ways that your support has enabled our partners on the ground to respond, is through the distribution of blankets, mattresses and food packages to families in evacuation centres, as well as conducting damage assessments on houses that will improve rebuilding efforts.

Through your generosity, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities can strengthen communities' resilience to extreme weather events. Village Disaster Management Committees develop and implement plans to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. These committees empower community members to use their knowledge of the local context to identify risks and drive change in their villages.

**"It gives us a sense of hope to know that our work supports the most vulnerable communities to work together and make their community safer for themselves, to know that communities have their plans on how to be prepared for disasters, to mitigate risk and what they can do to respond to disaster in their village,"** said Fernando Pires, Caritas Australia representative for Timor-Leste.

Your support fosters improved community preparedness against disasters, through:



water source catchment conservation techniques



building walls that prevent rivers and waterways from overflowing



using terracing and tree planting to prevent erosion and landslides.



Widespread damage has upended community life across Indonesia. Photo: Caritas Indonesia/Caritas Atambua

Around 40% of Indonesia's population is vulnerable to weather emergencies, with more frequent heat waves and floods. Droughts on southern islands and floods and cyclones are intensifying across the country.

- United Nations/Relief Web

## INDONESIA

Indonesia, one of the most populous countries in South-East Asia, is particularly vulnerable to frequent and often disastrous weather events like cyclones and the associated impact of widespread flooding, landslides and infrastructure damage.

When Tropical Cyclone Seroja hit Indonesia on Sunday April 4, at least 130 people lost their lives. Another 13,000 people were forced to flee their homes and seek shelter in evacuation centres.

Additionally, Indonesia is experiencing a COVID-19 crisis, with more than 1.7 million confirmed cases since the pandemic began – the highest number of cases in South-East Asia. There were 6,731 new COVID-19 cases recorded on the same day Tropical Cyclone Seroja struck.

Caritas Australia and its partners were already on the ground in East Nusa Tenggara province, where the disaster hit, working with villagers to implement a long-term livelihoods program through the Integrated Village Development Project.

The program equips communities with improved farming practices to increase their yield so that they can sell more goods at market and upskill locals through training in business management. During COVID-19 times, we also

There are many ways that your support helps communities during an emergency. With your support, Caritas Indonesia staff were on the ground,



Opening an emergency soup kitchen serving 3,280 disaster survivors



Providing emergency, ready-to-eat meals



Distributing emergency clean water and clothes to survivors

supported the community with critical personal protective equipment.

Thank you for helping communities to prepare for and respond to disasters in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as to the immediate aftermath of the emergencies themselves.

**[ Donate now at [www.caritas.org.au/support-asia](http://www.caritas.org.au/support-asia) ]**



## Give Monthly

Regular monthly donations are the most effective way to support long-term development through better community planning efforts.

Learn more at [www.caritas.org.au/neighbours](http://www.caritas.org.au/neighbours)





Students from a primary school in Eastern Highlands province, washing their hands, as one of the measures put into place by the school. Photo: Nigel Akuani

COVID-19 SPREADS ACROSS PNG

# BATTLING CONTAGION THROUGH EDUCATION


## THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND

How do you tackle the spread of a pandemic in a country as geographically remote and linguistically diverse as Papua New Guinea? For this you would need an interconnected network of community meeting points and a system of community organisers and leaders. In short, you would need the power of Caritas Australia's partner, the PNG church network.


Through your compassion, Caritas Australia's talented staff sprang into action. By engaging school teachers, clergy and volunteers, the network was able to implement a COVID-19 response strategy: focusing on distributing essential PPE (personal protective equipment) and informing community members about lifesaving health practices.

When COVID-19 first hit, Caritas Australia distributed almost \$250,000 worth of PPE to facilities in 19 provinces, comprising more than:

 **300,000** face masks, gloves and gowns, delivered to 1,460 health workers in 235 facilities

 Training for **200** teachers and health workers in COVID-19 awareness

 The production of **7** radio commercials and 18,300 educational posters, which reached 3,000 schools in 19 provinces

 **1,000** hygiene kits for vulnerable children, including those in orphanages, settlements and refugee camps

The Australian Government's distribution of 8,000 COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccines has been urgently needed in PNG. Poor infrastructure and limited medical capacity mean that ongoing support is needed to maximise the impact of the vaccinations.

In a country where testing rates remain low because of such a limited number of COVID-19 testing facilities, healthcare systems are almost at breaking point.

**"One of the challenges for PNG is the cost of testing and treatment,"** says Diane Unagi, Caritas Australia Country Representative for Papua New Guinea.

That's why your support in ongoing medical skills training and community awareness raising is so important in PNG, to build resilience long after the headlines change.

Visit [www.caritas.org.au/support-pacific](http://www.caritas.org.au/support-pacific) to make a donation today.

**"Health facilities across Papua New Guinea have struggled with a lack of medical supplies over the past year as they respond to COVID-19, so supplies of personal protective equipment will make an immediate difference where it matters."**

-Diane Unagi, Caritas Australia country representative, PNG.

## RADIO AND FILM SAVING LIVES

Across Papua New Guinea's Catholic School network, your support is crucial in raising awareness of, and implementing improved practices around, sanitation and hygiene.

Approximately half of PNG's schools and health centres are run by churches. This means that it's very effective to work through existing church networks to counter misinformation, build trust and reach the most vulnerable and marginalised people.

One way in which Caritas Australia is boosting the impact of COVID-19 prevention strategies is through multimedia messages, including short films and jingles for PNG radio stations.

Year Twelve student at Caritas Technical Secondary, Alison Shangkei, said she was grateful for the sessions on the environment and COVID-19.

**"I have now come to realise how serious and severe the problems are, and both lessons have really inspired me to do more, not just for me but for others and more importantly the environment,"** she said.

Fr Ambrose Pereira, Social Communications Commission Secretary, spoke on the aim of communicating messages through short film.

**"The important aspect of this program is not merely to communicate an idea or a news item but how we can elicit change in ourselves, make sure that there is community change and ultimately to ensure that there is change at the level of government,"** Fr Ambrose said.

## CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA AND ITS MEMBERS STEP UP TO RAISE OVER \$350,000 TO FIGHT COVID-19 IN PNG

**"When we join together, we can go further."** This is the message of Catholic Health Australia and its members, who this year stepped up to match

your generous donations with a massive \$356,200 to bolster health resilience against the pandemic in PNG.

This investment allows for an immediate increase in essential supplies such as personal protective equipment for health workers, medical supplies and triage tents.

Thank you, Catholic Health Australia, for standing with the people of PNG at this challenging time.

With your help, we can go further for the most vulnerable in PNG. There's still time to donate to help protect the people of PNG against the threat of COVID-19.

Through the Catholic Church Health Services network, Catholic Health Australia and its members can reach 247 health care facilities with over 1,400 medical staff spread throughout PNG provinces. This includes five hospitals, health centres and clinics and community health posts. Four of these facilities are currently administering COVID-19 testing, with the possibility of increasing this number if resourced.



Caritas Australia staff labelling PPE boxes ready for freighting. Photo: Roslyn Kuniata

THINKING CREATIVELY WITH OUR MOST VULNERABLE GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS

# YOUNG HEARTS UNITE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE



QLD | STUDENTS WORK AROUND THE 'CLUCK' FOR PROJECT COMPASSION!

All across Australia, you have joined the groundswell of support to 'Be More' for Project Compassion. Here are just some of the ways that you have come together to work towards more justice and equity for vulnerable communities.

## ADELAIDE | STUDENTS JOIN THE LONG WALK FOR JUSTICE

Across South Australia, nine Catholic Colleges came together for a coastal Caritas Ks. The students completed either a 3km walk or a 6km run, starting from Angus Neill Reserve Seacliff and looping between Brighton and Seacliff.

In the many communities where Caritas Australia works globally, it's mainly the women and the girls that walk an average of 6 km a day to obtain the water necessary for their survival.

At the end of the walk, students pooled their Project Compassion donations for Caritas Australia.

Thank you South Australian youth for walking towards a better, more just and equitable world.

School students strolled, walked and sprinted for Project Compassion in South Australia. Year Six student, Tom, still has plenty of energy left as he runs the 6km to put dollars in his Project Compassion box. Photo: Tracey Tessitore



The students from St John Bosco Catholic School in Collinsville, Queensland, recently shelled out an amazing effort for their Chicki-tas campaign.

For school Principal, Nicole Preitz, the impact of the initiative, which can help supply communities in the Solomon Islands with sustainable chicken farming projects, was inspiring.

*"For a school of 43 students, raising \$500 for Project Compassion is an excellent effort and as principal I was very proud of it. It is amazing what young people will do when they are given something tangible, that helps them to see the impact of their donation in real terms,"* Nicole said.

The commitment of the students was clear for all to see, as was their clucky sense of determination!



## SYDNEY | GETTING SOAKED FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



Photo: St Patrick's College, Sutherland

At St Patrick's College Sutherland, students hit the pavement as part of a Caritas Ks walk. They raised over \$20,000 for Project Compassion. As well as highlighting the plight of people globally who must walk hundreds of kilometres to meet their basic needs, the walk ended in one poor teacher's getting drenched.

Thank you, St Patrick's student body: your generosity is overflowing, just like the head of Year Seven coordinator, Mr Chris Postill! (pictured).

## VICTORIA | SMALL DROPS OF COMPASSION, STRONG CURRENTS OF CHANGE

Water access is one of the greatest necessities for wellbeing. Globally, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene could save the lives of 297,000 children under the age of five each year, according to the World Health Organisation.

In Echuca, Victoria, the severity of the global water crisis was powerfully communicated with an interactive water display.

A 1000L water container was set up in St Mary's Church forecourt. Students learnt of the ease with which this essential supply could be delivered to their community: with this amount being available to local farmers for just \$11.

Echuca students and parishioners participated in a sponsored Caritas Ks event. Knowing the distance around the city block was 600 metres, participants aimed to carry water 10 laps i.e. 6km, the average distance women and girls walk in many countries to collect water.

A meaningful act of solidarity raising both awareness and funds for the world's most vulnerable communities!



Caritas Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians, past, present and emerging, of the land on which all our offices are located. This edition may include images or words of indigenous people who may be deceased.



Caritas Australia is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Please note: some of the programs featured in this issue of Caritas News are funded by Caritas Australia and the Australian Government.



Caritas Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).



The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is the national regulator of charities.



Caritas Australia is a proud member of CAN, a group of eleven Church-based overseas aid and development agencies committed to empowering people and providing avenues for them to overcome injustice and poverty.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES HEAD TO:

24-32 O'Riordan St, Alexandria NSW 2015

1800 024 413 (toll free) 9am - 5pm AEST Mon - Fri

questions@caritas.org.au

www.caritas.org.au

twitter.com/CaritasAust

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youtube.com/CaritasAustralia

www.instagram.com/caritasaust/

MIX logo

Lat and Em worked hard all their lives as rice and poultry farmers in rural Cambodia, but only your support for improved farming techniques helped them to boost production and increase food and income security.

Around the world, families like Lat and Em's still live without the income they need to survive.

Please give generously today to help change the lives of more vulnerable families.



**YES, I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT TODAY!**

Below are some examples of how your donation can help:

- \$45** could help families to get started in poultry farming to improve their livelihoods.
- \$125** could help with the rehabilitation of community ponds to provide water for families and their agriculture production.
- \$250** could help construct a water tank tower to improve village hygiene and sanitation, especially during COVID-19 outbreaks.
- My choice of: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**YES, I WILL BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER:**

I would like to provide ongoing monthly support as part of the 'Caritas Neighbours' program:

- \$18 PER MONTH**    **\$51 PER MONTH**    **\$100 PER MONTH**   **OR**    **My choice of: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **per month**

**MY PAYMENT DETAILS**

**CHEQUE**    **MONEY ORDER**

**CREDIT CARD**

Visa    Mastercard    Amex    Diners

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_



**PLEASE DIRECT DEBIT MY ACCOUNT MONTHLY**

*I authorise Caritas Australia to debit the above amount from my account identified below on the 15th of each month. Acting on my instructions the user may, by prior arrangement and advice to me, vary the amount for future debits.*

Account name: \_\_\_\_\_

BSB: \_\_\_\_\_ Account no. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**BANK TRANSFER** to Caritas Australia – Bank: Commonwealth – BSB 062 438 – Acct 10072432 – Ref. EM21NL

Before payments commence, Caritas Australia will provide you with a full Service Agreement and confirmation of your details regarding this arrangement. Payments will be deducted on the 15th of the month or the next normal business day.

**MY CONTACT DETAILS**

Supporter ID: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like my receipt sent to my email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donations goes where it is needed most.
- I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.
- Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive Caritas News in the future.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Complete this form and return to **Caritas Australia**

Call us on **1800 024 413** with your credit card details

Donate online at **caritas.org.au/give**

**Caritas AUSTRALIA** End poverty Promote justice Uphold dignity

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