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POLL FINDS EASTER BECOMING TOO COMMERCIALISED

Eighty three per cent of Australians believe Easter is becoming too commercialised, according to a national poll released today, however, many Australians have been giving up things like chocolate, coffee or takeaway in the lead up to Easter to raise money for those less fortunate.

Caritas Australia's Project Compassion is underway and is expected to raise millions of dollars for some of the world's poorest communities. Caritas Australia last year reached 2 million people through emergency and development programs, thanks to its generous supporters.

Caritas spokesperson, Negaya Chorley said: "It's not surprising that so many Australians think Easter is too commercialised – we've had hot cross buns and Easter eggs in the shops since the start of January."

"Traditionally, the lead up to Easter, Lent, was a time to give up treats. We've been encouraging Australians to give up things like coffee, Netflix, or even smashed-avocado brunches, in the lead up to Easter, so that they can donate what they save to those less fortunate through our Project Compassion appeal.

"Whether you're religious or not, giving to charity can be a really rewarding experience and, for children, it's often an educational one," Ms Chorley said.

The national poll of one thousand respondents commissioned by Caritas also found:

- 70% of Australians believe should be Easter a time for giving to those less fortunate
- 70% find it annoying to see Easter eggs and hot cross buns on sale as early as January
- 72% said they found donating to charity a rewarding experience
- 57% would be willing to give up something like chocolate or coffee for a month or two to donate the savings to someone in poverty.

Of respondents, 35% said they were religious. Last year, almost a quarter of funds raised through Project Compassion came from schools.

Adriana Zappulla, a Year 11 student at Sydney's Bethlehem College, spoke of the powerful impact Project Compassion could have on poor communities all over the world.

"We're learning about what a big difference even small donations can make to communities in developing countries, especially young women and people with disabilities.

"I've given up fast food until Easter to save as much as I can to donate to Project Compassion. Something as simple as a dollar coin can make a world of difference!

"At school, we've held a coin challenge, competing to see who can build the longest line of coins to raise funds. So far we've raised \$850, which is enough to support a group of 25 women in the Philippines to start a small business."

To donate to Project Compassion or for fundraising ideas visit www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phone 1800 024 413.

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