

**MEDIA RELEASE: Socktober launch kicking goals for kids in need**

A nationwide schools engagement program is again shooting for success, using the game of soccer to educate and encourage support for mission projects around the world.

Socktober aims to engage Catholic school students' heads, hearts, and hands in key issues of mission and social justice through powerful metaphors found in sport, especially the world game of soccer. The program, run by Catholic Mission, will kick off nationally this week.

A Socktober Ambassador is W-League soccer star, Sarah Willacy.

"The soccer elements of the Socktober program offer a lot of fun for students, but it is the tangible lessons about the importance of serving those less fortunate that will stay with them through their life," she said.

In the Socktober program, students are encouraged to "kick goals for kids in need" through the program, which features a six-module journey of learning and formation, packed with activities and resources, and a popular penalty shootout activity which can be held on a school's mission day. As students kick their goals, they seek sponsorship from friends and family, with all funds raised supporting mission projects in Thailand.

The Socktober program also has the backing of several bishops and archbishops from across Australia.

Adelaide Archbishop Patrick O'Regan has joined with Archbishop Christopher Prowse of Canberra and Goulburn and Bishop Michael Kennedy of Armidale, all three throwing their support behind the program.

"Many kids around the world play soccer with a ball made of rags; it reminds us how blessed we are in a country like Australia," said Bishop Kennedy.

"We all are called to be missionaries in the church, and to do something practical with mission. So, here's your chance to get on board with Socktober, have some fun and be helping people at the same time."

"I hope you give generously with the head, heart and hands reaching out to those in situations far more dire than here in Australia," said Archbishop Prowse.

"Socktober's got my support; I hope it's got yours."

The 2021 Socktober program will be officially launched in Brisbane on Thursday. Ms Willacy, a goalkeeper for the Western Sydney Wanderers, is unavailable for the launch at St Columban's College. Her place will be taken by players from the Brisbane Roar.

Sue Williams, Catholic Mission's Youth and Schools Engagement Officer for Queensland, says schools in her region are very keen to get involved.

"We had such a disrupted year in 2020, but the support from schools across Queensland and Australia was fantastic, nonetheless," she said.

"This year with fewer restrictions on gatherings and more time in class, we know Socktober will be a great celebration of mission for students, as well as a valuable learning and formation experience."

Primary and secondary schools are invited to register for Socktober today by heading to [socktober.org.au](https://socktober.org.au) where they can find all the resources and activities to fully engage with World Mission Month in 2021.

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**Captions:** Socktober uses the game of soccer to educate and encourage support for mission projects around the world. The program has the backing of several bishops and archbishops from across Australia.

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**About Catholic Mission**

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church’s global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ’s mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Founded in Sydney in 1847, Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and take action for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.