

***** MEDIA RELEASE *****

Nine in ten Australians believe the biggest polluters should pay for the impacts of climate change

10th November 2022

Polling commissioned by Caritas Australia to coincide with COP27 finds climate change is the biggest global concern for two thirds of Australians, easily outranking armed conflict, even as war rages in Ukraine.

A key question for COP27 is who should pay the costs of global warming – also known as climate finance. The research also found that nine in ten Australians believe the biggest polluters should pay for the impacts of climate change.

The research found almost all Australians (91%) feel it's important that Australia is a good partner and neighbour to other Pacific countries.

"There are few regions that feel the brunt of climate change like the Pacific. Their homes and ways of life are being swept away by rising sea levels and destroyed by cyclones and king tides. Our partners are telling us that they are picking up the bones of their ancestors like shells on the beach, as burial grounds are being washed away by rising tides," said Damian Spruce, Caritas Australia's Advocacy Associate Director.

Small island nations in the Pacific have contributed only 0.5 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions yet are struggling to pay for the increased frequency and severity of climate change impacts.

A new report, "Twin clouds on the horizon", by Caritas Oceania and Jubilee Australia Research Centre shows that the Pacific region is facing a perfect storm of climate change induced disasters and skyrocketing debt burdens. The report calls for international governments, including the Australian Government, to take the lead on climate debt in the Pacific through restructuring debt, improving climate finance and funding the Pacific Resilience Facility.

"We're taking this report to COP27, where we will be able to ensure that the Pacific region remains a focus for global climate change talks," said Dr Spruce.

"Our partners in the Pacific are telling us that they are surrounded by water, but there is not enough to drink. They have contaminated ground water from rising sea levels, and they are forced to shore up their seawalls with old tyres. The Pacific region is calling on big wealthy polluters to finally pick up the bill for their climate debts."

Caritas Australia's research found that while around half feel that the Albanese government is doing a better job on climate change than the Morrison government (47%), three-quarters of Australians feel the government should be doing more to mitigate climate change (75%).

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will not be attending COP27. Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen, Pacific Minister Pat Conroy and Senator Jenny McAllister

The Catholic agency for international aid and development

Address: Suite 1, Level 2, Building 3, 189 O'Riordan Street, Mascot NSW 2020

Phone: 1800 024 413 **Fax:** +61 2 8306 3401

Email: hello@caritas.org.au **ABN:** 90 970 605 069

Join us online at:
www.caritas.org.au



ACFID
MEMBER

will instead represent Australia.

“This is better than the Morrison Government, but we want to see more. COP27 is meant to be all implementation and action, and we’re calling on the Australian Government, and indeed the world, to ensure that the communities living on the frontlines of climate change do not need to pay for the excesses of the big polluters,” said Dr Spruce.

Contact: Jessica Stone 0490 684 867 / jessica.stone@caritas.org.au

NOTE:

Dr Damian Spruce is available for interview from Egypt during COP27 discussions.

The poll was conducted by Antenna Insights on behalf of Caritas Australia and included 1006 Australians from a national sample weighted for representation against the 2021 census. The survey was conducted between 31st of October to the 2nd of November 2022.

ENDS