

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

Caritas Australia urges continued focus on the world's most vulnerable

9 May 2023

Caritas Australia commends the ongoing commitment of the Australian Government to our region in the latest Federal Budget.

“There is no doubt that we have seen an increase in the aid budget since the Albanese Government came to office,” said Caritas Australia’s Advancement Director, Richard Landels.

“We commend the Albanese Government for their willingness to tackle complex humanitarian and development needs around the world.”

“We’re pleased to see a focus on climate change adaptation in this budget. This will strengthen the ability of Pacific nations to withstand the shocks of climate change. Additionally, the \$4 million increase for gender equality, disability, and social inclusion, along with an \$8.8 million increase in Disaster Risk Reduction, is encouraging.”

“We remain hopeful that the government will see the need for further commitment to the global hunger crisis. Displacement and hunger loom large, and the international community must act now to prevent catastrophe.”

Over the past year, Australia has allocated an additional \$40 million to famine relief, but more is needed. The global hunger crisis has worsened significantly, compounded by climate change, COVID-19 and conflict. Approximately a quarter of a billion people are now facing acute hunger, 65 million more compared to last year.

Conditions in hunger hotspots like the Horn of Africa are deteriorating rapidly. In Somalia, 90 per cent of people do not have enough to eat. The recent outbreak of conflict in Sudan, accompanied by mass displacement and agricultural disruptions, will likely exacerbate the plight of this drought-stricken region.

“The Federal Budget has shone a spotlight on the cost-of-living crisis here in Australia, and for good reason, but we are not alone. Already vulnerable regions are also facing their own cost of living crisis with little to no support. They are suffering from the same impacts of the war in Ukraine and COVID-19, but then must deal with conflicts and climate change on top of this.”

“We know that if we intervene sooner rather than later, we will save more lives, and do so far more cheaply than after the crisis has escalated. We urge the Labor Government to continue to provide hunger and famine relief to prevent this catastrophe.”

Caritas Australia works hand in hand with the most marginalised and remote communities in Australia and overseas to address poverty and inequality with a focus on long-term and sustained development programs. Over the past year Caritas Australia has supported 20 countries through 71 long-term projects.

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

NOTE: Richard Landels, Caritas Australia's Advancement Director is available for interview.

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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



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