

Stronger Together, Partners in Change

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

The Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development



End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

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I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

- Mother Teresa



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. At Caritas Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which our offices are based. This land always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Caritas Australia offices are located on the lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation in Sydney, the Boon Wurrung People and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) Peoples of the Kulin Nation in Melbourne, the Whadjuk of the Noongar Nation in Perth, the Turrbal and Jagera People in Brisbane, and the Ngunnawal People in Canberra.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of First Australians. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Cover and Back cover: Caritas Australia Solomon Islands staff member, Rose Clough, with students from rural training centre in the Solomon Islands. Photo: Neil Nuia/Caritas Australia.

Inside cover: A general view of Bukavu in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Photo: Arlette Bashizi/Caritas Australia.

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Our Story

For nearly 60 years, Caritas Australia has worked hand in hand with the most marginalised and remote communities in Australia and overseas. We work with our partners towards a world where all can thrive and reach their full potential.

As the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church in Australia, Caritas Australia works with and for all people, to address immediate needs and long-term goals, regardless of religion, race or political beliefs.

Through partnerships with local organisations and Church networks, and as a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world, we are able to reach where the need is greatest and work together for a just future.

Through locally-led programs, we accompany communities to build on existing local strengths and resources, supporting them to drive their own development, for more transformative and sustainable change. Our programs are designed to achieve long lasting positive impacts. When a crisis hits, we work through our local partnerships to bring aid and relief to people whose lives have been devastated by natural disaster or conflict.

Caritas Australia has a rich history of partnership with parishes, schools and communities across Australia. We advocate for social and ecological justice for those most impacted by inequality. Above all, with shared compassion and hope, we work towards a just future for all.

Our Inspiration

Caritas Australia is inspired by the Gospel, which finds its expression in Catholic Social Traditions. Jesus returned as a young adult to his home town of Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-30).

He chose light. Coming home, he knew this meant a fresh way of understanding himself and the world. He was to be an agent for change, for loving relationships. He had a vision of freedom. It is a vision we share, one of justice, dignity and hope.

Our Mission

In the spirit of the Gospel, we work in partnership with communities in Australia and overseas to achieve their development goals and to thrive.

Our Vision

Justice, dignity and hope for humanity and all of God's creation.

Justice



The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
For He has anointed me to bring
good news to the poor.

Dignity



He has sent me to proclaim
release to captives,
Sight to the blind, to let the
oppressed go free.

Hope



To proclaim a year of the
Lord's favour.



From our Chair

As vulnerable communities around the world continue to face inequalities and poverty, we are reminded of the vital importance of working together in the spirit of cooperation.

This year, I had the opportunity to visit India for the launch of the Dignity of Children in India 'Khushal Bachpan' program, and experience first-hand the benefits of nurturing strong, long-lasting partnerships. The five-year program came as a result of 43 years of partnership and collaboration between Caritas Australia and Caritas India, now working together to ensure children in more than 50 villages can have safe, happy and dignified childhoods.

Seeing the determination, resilience and solidarity of those we work with fills me with optimism and hope for the future.

The Gospel calls us to love all our sisters and brothers, and demands that we promote peace, equality and justice in a world surrounded by violence and conflict. Thus, it is through effective partnerships and through solidarity that we build resilience and support communities to drive their own development.

"And if one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering; if one member is honoured, all rejoice with it. Now you [collectively] are Christ's body, and individually you are members of it, each with his own special purpose and function" (1 Corinthians 12:26,27).

As we focus our efforts to achieve our strategic goals and address the structures that perpetuate inequalities, it is important to acknowledge the wonderful support of the Australian Church and Catholic community, as well as the leadership and encouragement we receive from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

I would like to express my gratitude to John Watkins AM who retired from the Board during this financial year and acknowledge his pivotal role in the establishment of the new governance arrangements for Caritas Australia. I also express my thanks to Jack De Groot whose term on the Board finished this year. His extraordinary commitment and dedication as both a Board member and previous CEO is much appreciated.

My deep thanks are also extended to my fellow Board and Sub Committee members for their relentless work and exemplar governance throughout the year.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of our partners and the generosity of our supporters. You are the pillars that hold our organisation together and that make our work possible.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to our Chief Executive Officer Kirsty Robertson, the leadership team and each and every member of staff at Caritas Australia for their work and dedication to upholding our values and achieving our mission.

Robert Fitzgerald, AM
Chair



From our CEO

Last year was filled with crises some of us never imagined we would witness in our lifetime. There was the escalation and subsequent horrors of the Ukraine war, the devastating impact of the food crisis across Africa and the ongoing effects brought on by climate change, threatening the existence of small islands in the Pacific.

Vulnerable communities around the world also had to deal with simultaneous issues that continued to impact their lives, and in some cases put their lives at risk: lack of access to water and sanitation, gender inequality, food insecurity, and lack of education. As communities face connected challenges and risks, the need for strong and effective partnerships is imperative.

"Stronger Together, Partners in Change" speaks to this sense of collectiveness driving the way we react to mutual adversities and work towards lasting sustainable change. We cannot do it alone, and 'partnership' is at the core of what we do.

Through developing new and strengthening existing long-term partnerships, Caritas Australia is able to listen even more closely to the needs of vulnerable people and the advice of our partners, and to actively assist wherever the need is greatest. As a result, we have helped develop new programs in more than 25 countries, including Fiji, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Last year, as travel restrictions were finally lifted, I had the opportunity to visit Ethiopia and witness the urgent need that people were facing and the amazing work of our partners on the ground. I also had the privilege to attend the 22nd Caritas Internationalis General Assembly in Rome, in which Pope Francis reminded us of the importance of listening and learning from others:

"Living charity – caritas – thus entails being magnanimous and benevolent, recognizing for example that to work together constructively first requires "making space" for others." (Pope Francis, Private Audience to the General Assembly, May 2023).

Closer to home, our advocacy efforts influenced government policy to create positive change for vulnerable communities across the globe, including our neighbours in the Pacific who continue to suffer the increasing effects of the climate crisis.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude towards Caritas Australia's community – our Board, our leadership team and staff, both in Australia and overseas, our supporters in every school and Parish, and our partners. Without your tireless work, your solidarity and your unwavering generosity none of our wonderful achievements throughout the year would have been possible.

On behalf of everyone at Caritas Australia, I thank you once again for your support and for your work, and hope that our partnership can continue to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer



The Gospel calls us to love all our sisters and brothers, and demands that we promote peace, equality and justice in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.



"Stronger Together, Partners in Change" speaks to this sense of collectiveness driving the way we react to mutual adversities and work towards lasting sustainable change. We cannot do it alone, and 'partnership' is at the core of what we do.





From our Mission Facilitator

Change is difficult on your own. I am sure that is why people join clubs: running clubs, cooking clubs, meditation circles. You name it. We need others to grow.

When I think about it, every year is a year of partnership at Caritas Australia. Partnership is the way we work, and we learn a great deal from our partners.

Over the past twelve months, I had the good fortune to visit some of our partners in Timor-Leste. This required quite a journey through steep terrain, past the town of Balibo which provides so many reminders of the ways in which the history of our two countries are entwined. Half an hour beyond is Maliana, we were welcomed by a community we had assisted to establish a more reliable water supply. I often remember them when I walk a few metres to the bathroom and simply turn on the tap.

Closer to home, our celebration of Thank You Day provided a welcome opportunity to speak to some of our supporters, people with whom we have a vital partnership. Often our supporters ask for prayers, and we remember them at our Friday gatherings. During Agency Week, we heard from Archbishop Costelloe, the president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. We were reminded of our place within an elaborate network of partnership. All that we do is accomplished within the context of relationship, above all with those most alienated from the comforts and privileges many of us take for granted.

The word partner is not used very often in the New Testament. There is one story near the beginning of Luke's Gospel where Jesus is teaching beside the lake. He asks a man called Simon to let him use his boat as a platform, so he can speak without being crushed by the crowd. Twice in the story, we hear about Simon's partners. The first time is when he needs help to bring ashore a huge catch of fish. The second time is when James and John are described as his partners. This is the ordinary world of work and business in a marginal enterprise with good days and bad days.

Jesus asks the workers to follow him and become 'fishers of people.' He changes their idea of partnership to become something riskier and more relational. They will leave the known world of boats and nets and take to the road, open to whoever they might meet, learning from Jesus how to see the world with compassionate eyes. They learn that partnership is not a closed circle but an open one. They will learn how to love. Please God, we are doing the same.

Michael McGirr
Mission Facilitator



All that we do is accomplished within the context of relationship, above all with those most alienated from the comforts and privileges many of us take for granted.



Our Values

PARTNERSHIP



Caritas Australia is an agent of joy. We are a wonderful network of relationships between people, all of whom have their own story and their own understanding of life's mystery. We try to be as open as Jesus was, especially to the possibilities for those who long for healing. We exist to contribute to that healing, to celebrate the capability of those we encounter. We are servants, not judges. We try to respond to real needs, not the needs we imagine. We do not create co-dependents. Caritas Australia does not want to live in a divided world. We want to walk with the people who welcome us into their lives and communities.

COURAGE



Caritas Australia stands at the foot of the cross. We make bold decisions in faith. We ask difficult questions about the nature of society and its underlying assumptions. We sometimes act in the face of complacency and criticism. We stand alongside people who are pushed out of other conversations. We are engaged in a vigorous arm-wrestle with the complacency of a culture that is often indifferent to suffering beyond our borders. Above all, we work for justice for all people.

COMPASSION



Caritas Australia understands that compassion involves our whole being: our heart, hands, and head. Our emotional response to poverty moves us to think deeply with our partners about the most constructive response to them. This leads to committed and active relationships. In turn, this leads us back to a heartfelt response and the circle of transformation continues. Compassion is not a transitory experience. St Ignatius of Loyola spoke of *discreta caritas*, which means discerning love. Discerning caritas. We hope that our compassion is the source of wisdom and fidelity. Guided by the Spirit, we work for the long haul, for the liberation of all creation.

STEWARDSHIP



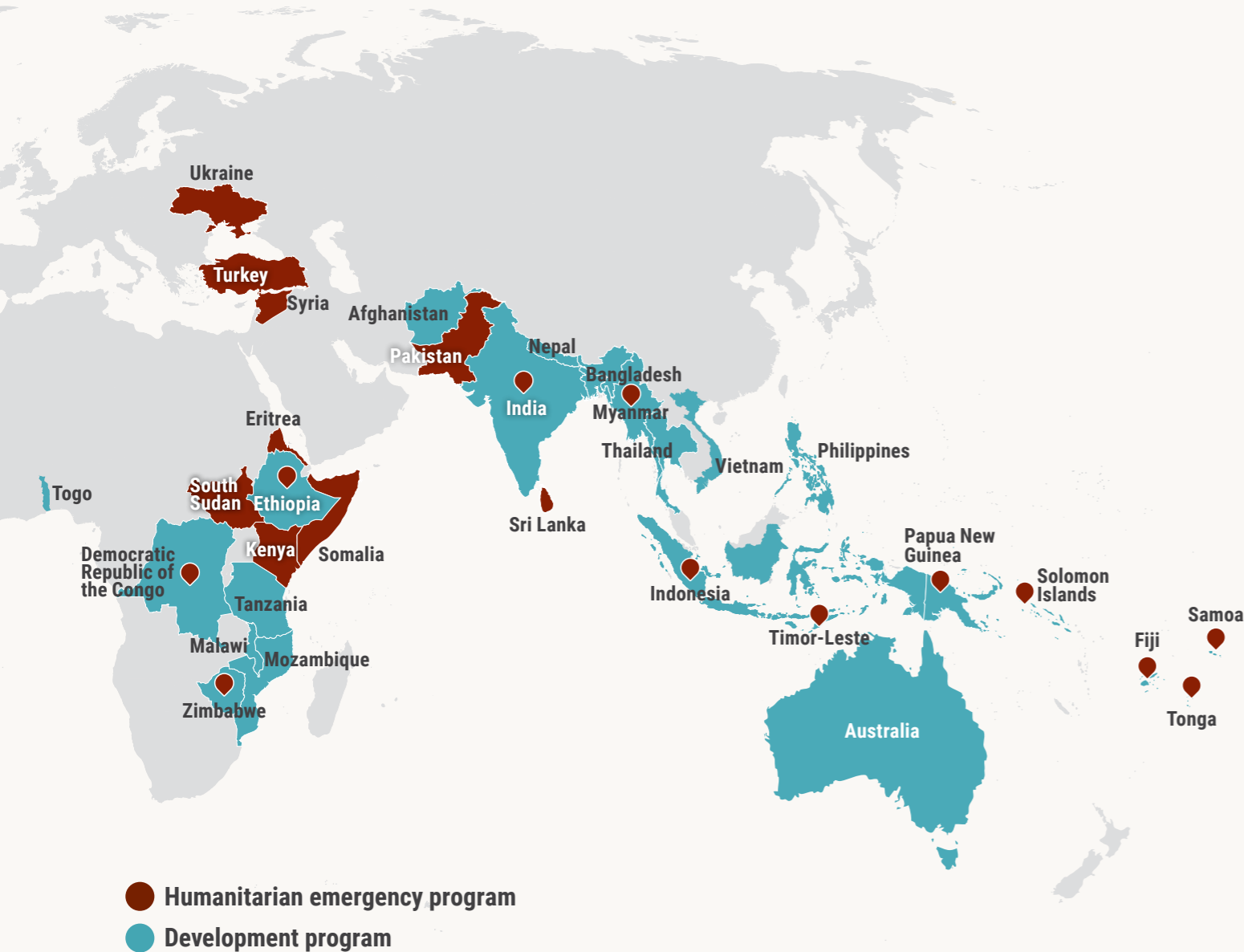
Caritas Australia has a profound commitment to care for the earth and stewardship for creation. We also have a deep sense of gratitude for the resources entrusted to us by our supporters. There are many who give from their hearts, people who make sacrifices so they can help the people we serve together. Their stories are a constant inspiration. We honour them through our dedication, probity, and transparency. We honour them by making decisions based on substance. We honour the earth, our common home, through the sensitivity of our homemaking.



Child Club members during a debating competition in Nepal. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

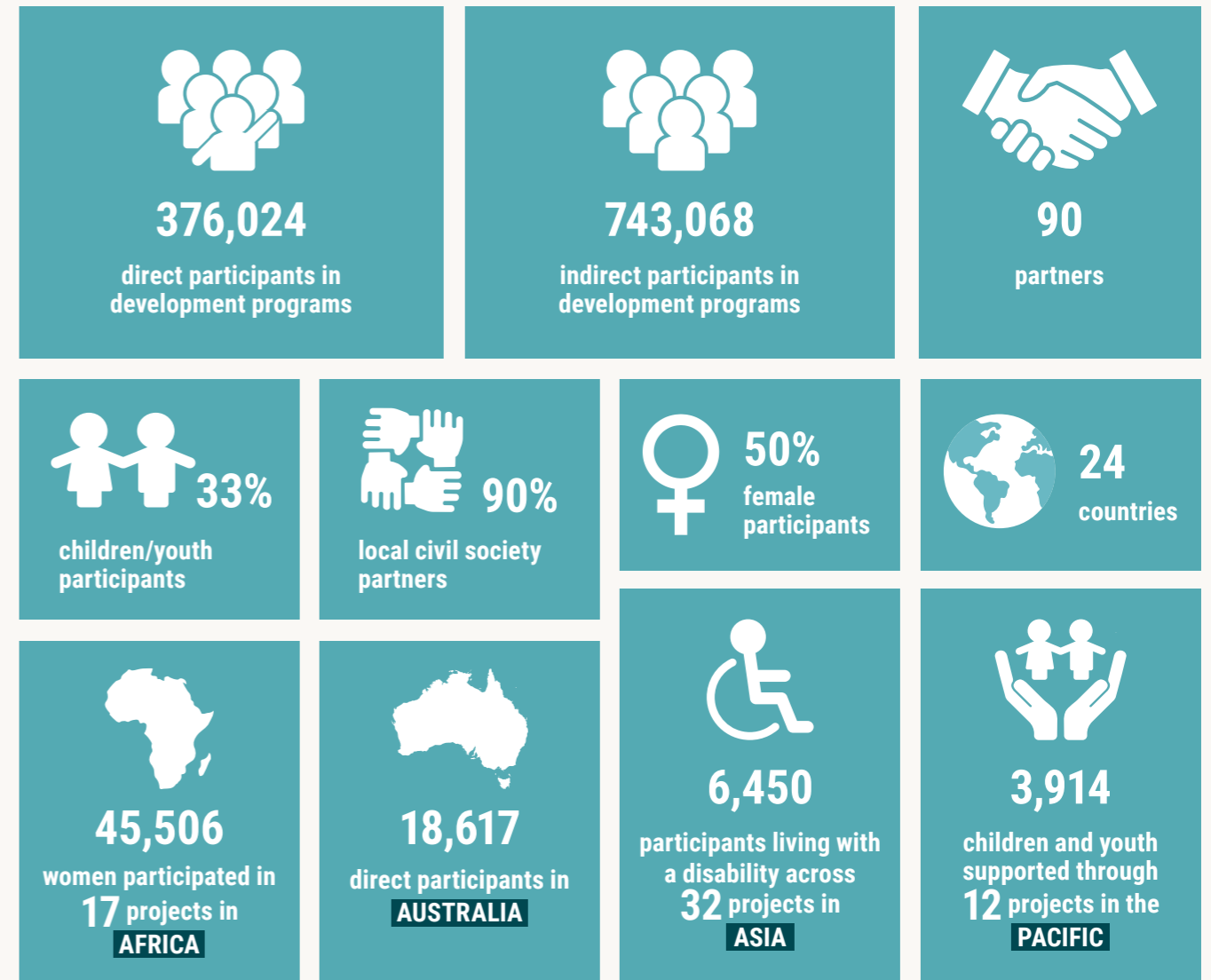
Our Impact

Through partnerships with local organisations and Church networks, and as a member of Caritas Internationalis, the second-largest humanitarian network in the world, we are able to reach where the need is greatest and work together for a just future.



Find out more at www.caritas.org.au/about/where-we-work/

Development programs



Humanitarian Emergencies



Our Goal

All people, especially women, are supported to lead their development and thrive.

Our Impact

6,137
women supported to assume leadership roles

11,396
women had access to financial services

41,371
people participated in sessions on gender issues and women's rights



ROSALIE'S STORY

Breaking the cycle of poverty to create brighter futures in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Women and girls, particularly those living in poverty, consistently face gender discrimination, inequality and economic hardship. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the cycle of poverty continues when women have no choice over their life decisions. Ongoing conflict, limited access to education, and gender-based violence are all contributing factors to the lack of autonomy in their lives.

Caritas Australia's partners in the DRC have been implementing programs to help women and girls break the cycle of poverty, secure employment and income, and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Rosalie was only 14 years old when she had to drop out of school due to the financial constraints of her family. She had few options and became a child soldier. Even after getting married and having children, Rosalie had to continue to work as a soldier - she had no other option, and this was the only life she knew.

"I walked with a child in my left hand, a box of ammunition on my head and another child on my back. I also had a weapon on my right shoulder. The chief commander had no mercy on me, even though I had my baby on my back," said Rosalie.

When Rosalie was finally demobilised from the army after six years, she was eager to start a new life, free from violence. But with her childhood and education cut short, she had missed out on developing skills that would help her to find secure employment.

Determined to turn her life around, she joined the Integrated Community Development program, supported by Caritas Australia, and its partner organisations, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Caritas Bukavu.

Through the program, Rosalie participated in business and social skills training and joined a Saving and Internal Lending Community group, which helped her with a loan to start her own small business, selling second-hand shoes and natural remedies.

"I can eat, dress, maintain my health and help others. My children study and manage to eat twice a day," said Rosalie, *"and I have learnt to work hand-in-hand with other members of the community".*

Rosalie is now a business owner, a community leader and a role model for other ex-combatants who are seeking to readjust to civilian life. This program is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Program achievements



177

households adopted innovative and sustainable agriculture practices



298

people increase their incomes



278

people educated in prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse of children

Our Goal

All people, especially the most marginalised, experience wellbeing and live in safe, just societies.

Our Impact

31,607
people with improved drinking water sources

62,094
people participated in sessions on child protection, including prevention and response

18,864
people with improved sanitation facilities



Thu looks after cows near his home in Vietnam. Photo: Phan Tan Lam/Caritas Australia.

THU'S STORY

Empowering people with disabilities in Vietnam

Vietnam has made significant economic and social progress since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, however poverty and inequality remain widespread across the country. The repercussions of landmines and chemical warfare are also still seen in the large numbers of people living with a disability.

Thu was just 12 years old when he lost his leg. One day, he was looking after his cows when he stepped on an unexploded land mine. Living with a disability in rural Vietnam presented many challenges for Thu, who worked mainly as a rice farmer. After his wife, Linh, suffered a stroke, Thu also had to take on the additional role of her carer.

"She almost lost herself after the stroke and had to lean on me. I could understand how she felt because I had experienced the same at the age of 12 after a landmine accident took one of my legs," said Thu.

Determined to turn their lives around, Thu and Linh joined the 'Together We Can' Disability Project, run by Caritas Australia's local partner in Vietnam, the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development (SRD). The Vietnam Disability Program supports people who are facing the challenging combination of poverty and disability, by improving their access to vital healthcare services and education, as well as increasing their participation in social life.

With support from the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), the program helps people living with disabilities to establish Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLA) so that they can access affordable loans. Thu was able to obtain a low-interest loan, which he used to open his own barber shop on a new road that was constructed near his home.

The VSLA provided a welcoming and inclusive space for Thu and Linh to socialise, learn new skills and give support to others. ***"I think having a club is good, where people living with disabilities can join and help one another. Additionally, there are many meaningful activities from the project to support my family and others,"*** said Thu.

The program also helped him build an accessible toilet for Linh, who has become more independent thanks to the support of a physiotherapist. For Thu, the greatest impact that the program has had is seeing the change in Linh's physical and mental wellbeing.

Program achievements



488

individuals have joined people with disabilities clubs



505

community members and caregivers participated in savings and loan groups and livelihood activities



54

people with disabilities reported improved health due to ongoing support from physiotherapists and/or rehabilitation devices

Our Goal

A common home where all people are resilient and achieve sustainable livelihoods and ecological justice.

Our Impact

8,188

people started a business with support from the project

36,473

people adopted innovative and sustainable agricultural practices

16,500

people had access to financial services



MARIA'S STORY

Boosting food security through sustainable farming in Tanzania

Although Tanzania has experienced steady economic growth in recent years, it continues to struggle with the impacts of the climate changes, high poverty rates, chronic malnutrition and poor access to basic services. More than 14 million people are living in poverty, while 34 percent of children under five experience stunted growth (WFP, 2022).

Caritas Australia, through its local partner, Diocese of Mbulu Development Department (DMDD), supports marginalised communities by improving access to water, hygiene, and sanitation and boosting food security. Delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), the A+ program helps communities to identify the skills and resources they can use to reach their goals.

Water scarcity has meant poor harvests and a low income in the past years for Maria and her husband, who have a small farm growing onion, maize, beans and vegetables. When Maria heard about the program, she saw it as her chance to achieve what she had always wanted.

Maria embraced all the program's activities, which included training in sustainable farming techniques, entrepreneurship, literacy and numeracy, gender awareness, environmental protection, hygiene and sanitation. This led her to a role as the village's waterpoint caretaker - collecting fees and keeping the area clean. She receives a small income that enables her to buy farm items, food, medicine and school materials for her six children.

"Before the A+ program, I didn't know that we had rights and was too shy to express my opinions," Maria says. *"Now I want to motivate others to participate in activities in the village, I want to help women to become aware of their rights and to help others to achieve their dream"*

Maria's growing confidence also motivated her to speak out at village meetings and to campaign for election as a local councillor - which she won. Now Maria and her husband can produce enough food for their family to eat three meals per day throughout the entire year, using a variety of nutritious foods. They also have enough to sell which has increased their income.

The program also helped Maria's village to install a new borehole, so that community members don't have to walk long distances to access safe, clean water. Existing irrigation systems which increased food security were also rehabilitated.

Program achievements



Over **9,900** people have been directly supported through the program, with over **21,000** indirectly supported



More than **6,700** people now have improved access to clean water



Over **6,300** people have improved access to sufficient food

Our Goal

Communities affected by conflict and disasters can meet their immediate needs, and recover and build back stronger from crises.

Our Impact

390,665

people reached directly through humanitarian response

19,738

people participated in the development or implementation of disaster risk reduction plans

48,240

people reached by humanitarian response activities delivered with long-term development programs



Lenty now knows what to do during an emergency thanks to the Singing our Way to Safety program. Photo: Caritas Australia Solomon Islands.

LENTY'S STORY

Singing their way to safety in the Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the Pacific region and in the world. The country is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. Cyclones and earthquakes strike frequently, with the potential to cause severe damage and loss of life.

Since 2018, the Happy, Healthy and Holistic (3H) Community Development Program, implemented by Caritas Australia Solomon Islands (CASI), has been supporting five remote communities and three rural training centers across two provinces. The program has helped over 3,000 people in the last five years by improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene, promoting social justice and building disaster resilience.

Now a new component of the program is helping children prepare for emergencies. Through nursery rhymes, students from the Malaita province are learning how to stay safe, be prepared and respond to natural disasters. The Singing our Way to Safety program provides training in Disaster Risk Reduction to teachers in the Solomon Islands so they can educate their students on what to do during an emergency.

Teachers from nine schools in the Malaita province participated in the training in which they learnt to teach their students nursery rhymes that related to preparedness actions around tsunamis, floods, cyclones, and earthquakes.

Like the 190 students who participated in the program, six-year-old Lenty was able to memorise and learn what to do when a natural disaster occurs.

"My teacher told me to run to higher ground if there is an earthquake, tsunami or flood," Lenty said. ***"She also told me to stay away from fallen houses or trees if there is an earthquake or cyclone. Take cover under the table if an earthquake occurs."***

All participants were provided copies of the Singing our Way to Safety Workbook and other Disaster Risk Reduction materials, with the training facilitated by local partner, the Malaita Provincial Disaster Management Office (PDMO).

The training came into practice when a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck the Solomon Islands in late November 2022. One of the teachers who participated in the program reported that her students immediately knew what to do during the earthquake and even had a better knowledge of emergency responses than many adults in the community.

There were no casualties from the earthquake, and activities like the Singing our Way to Safety are essential in helping children across Solomon Islands to mitigate the impacts of disasters.

Program achievements



9

schools learnt through nursery rhymes how to respond to disaster



4,497

people participated in emergency activities



Over **1,300**

people gained improved access for sufficient food

Our Response



Supporting people affected by the conflict in Ukraine


Conflict and displacement continued to devastate Ukraine and the toll on civilians has been catastrophic. Over eight million Ukrainians have been forced from their homes and fled to neighbouring countries, while a further 5.4 million have sought refuge in other parts of Ukraine, where they face the further threat of violence and displacement.


Across the country, homes and vital infrastructure have been destroyed with critical services like power, heating and water affected as the government tries to ration the existing resources and energy. This is particularly challenging with the brutal winter that the country has faced.


Caritas Australia supports our partners, Caritas Ukraine, Caritas Spes Ukraine and DePaul International through CAFOD, on the ground to provide emergency support. Since the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, close to five million people affected by the war have been assisted.

As part of the Ukraine response, we are supporting our partner

With your support, our Caritas partners in Ukraine and Moldova were able to provide aid in the form of:

 Over **1.9 million** people received food distributions

 More than **690,000** people received hygiene kits

 More than **290,000** people received protection services

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Moldova to provide transitional accommodation to Ukrainians displaced by the conflict and, so far, have provided 10,000 Ukrainian refugees with safe and dignified transitional accommodation.

When Olga saw the footage of Russian forces invading Ukraine on her television screen, she knew she had to do something to help those fleeing the war. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, more than 890,000 people have crossed the border into Moldova, the majority of them women, children and the elderly.

“I was watching TV, and I started to cry, seeing what destruction there is in Ukraine,” Olga said.

“When I was asked on the phone if I agreed to receive some people with this trouble from Ukraine, I agreed at once.”

The Safe and Dignified Accommodation Program provides financial support for host families like Olga’s, who are housing Ukrainian refugees in their homes, as well as, incentivising homeowners with vacant apartments and houses to rent to refugees. Over 2,000 Moldovan households have been supported with incentives for hosting refugees.

So far, Olga has hosted more than eight refugees in her home. She recalls one family who felt immense gratitude and relief after arriving at her home.

“When they got to my house, those kids, they started crying and got on their knees,” Olga said.

“And they say, ‘Mum, it is so good here.’ They were frozen, hungry.”

These responses included funding from:

EMERGENCY ACTION ALLIANCE



Caritas network responding to earthquake damage. Photo: Caritas network.

Providing relief in Türkiye and Syria


It is just over six months since a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck killing over 50,000 people across Türkiye and neighbouring Syria, injuring over 100,000 and leaving over 10 million in need of urgent aid.

On both sides of the border, the earthquake and series of aftershocks caused widespread destruction and damage with the freezing winter only adding to the devastation.


Across Syria and Türkiye communities were left in desperate need of assistance from international supporters in order to recover and start rebuilding their lives.

With your support, our Caritas partners in Türkiye and Syria were able to provide immediate emergency assistance to over 70,000 people particularly in regions of Northwest Syria in the form of:

 Mattresses, blankets, pillow, tent covers, and tents

 Heaters and bio charcoal consisting of olive seed

 Batteries for lighting

 Ready to eat meals and food baskets for families

Our Caritas partners assisted in the immediate response including work to remove rubble and debris, as well as providing medical treatment and first aid points.

Work is continuing. Counselling and support services for parents and their children are underway as is the distribution of dignity kits for displaced women and girls. Caritas agencies continue to support the needs, equipment and infrastructure of refuge centres to provide safe and dignified quality care.

Our Partnerships



Staff from the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) outside the FCJ Centre in Quezon City, the Philippines. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

Facing challenges and embracing opportunities together

Partnership – working in collaboration – and cooperation is at the heart of Caritas Australia. This year we worked with **93** partners in Australia and overseas, of which **40** per cent were Caritas Internationalis Member Organisations.

As part of these partnerships, Caritas Australia supported **30** Organisational Development projects, investing in partners' governance, systems, and people to create strong and sustainable local organisations.


Building connection at the community level

Caritas Australia also support our partners to build connections with and strengthen other community-based organisations and local government structures through our programs. Throughout the year, Caritas Australia funded programs and engaged and strengthened a further **4,113** local level community structures including:

 **1,121**
Self-help groups

 **883**
Farmers groups

 **220**
Health Posts or Health Centres

 **157**
Community Based Organisations

 **303**
Public schools



Pauline Langi-Bourke, Sesilia Malialosa Tapueluelu and Sofia To'a from Caritas Tonga and Nicole Chehine from Caritas Australia. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Working towards more fruitful partnerships

In September 2022, Caritas Australia undertook a Partner Survey to hear directly from partners about the quality of our relationships, and how our collective work is supporting them to not only deliver impactful programs; but also, to strengthen their own organisations.

The survey had responses from **55** partners, and highlighted some key areas of great strength in our partnership approach; as well as opportunities to further strengthen our ways of working.

What has been partners' experience working with Caritas Australia?

- All respondents were satisfied with their partnership with Caritas Australia, with **73** per cent indicating that they were very satisfied
- **90** per cent of partners felt valued and respected by Caritas Australia
- All respondents felt very comfortable providing feedback or raising concerns with Caritas Australia, with **82** per cent feeling very comfortable

Caritas Oceania members reunited in Papua New Guinea

In October 2022, Caritas Australia staff and our partners from Caritas PNG, Aotearoa New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and Samoa came together to discuss the issues and challenges facing our region as part of the annual Caritas Oceania forum. For the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak, the forum was held in person in Papua New Guinea, reuniting old friends with many moments of laughter and song. There were also some robust discussions on the governance of the region around how we collectively respond to disasters and around our understanding of vulnerability. Joining the forum was the President of Caritas Internationalis, His Eminence Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, to strengthen the relationship between Rome and the Pacific region and help us bring forward the climate agenda.

- **72** per cent of partners felt their organisational development priorities were being met
- **70** per cent of partners felt power was shared equally within our partnerships.

What is most important to our partners?

- Trust and respect
- Flexibility in how funds are used and continuity of funding
- Being responsive to need.

What are the key areas where partners would like more support from Caritas Australia?

- Financial systems and policies
- Donor diversification and fundraising
- Program development and project design
- Governance and leadership.

Partnership Framework:

Caritas Australia developed a new Partnership Framework, guided by the Caritas Internationalis Partnership Principles and informed by the partner survey and broader partner consultation. The framework includes:

- Commitment to agreed partnership principles
- Revised partnership approach and accompanying toolkit
- Commitments to ongoing learning and reflection within our partnerships, including an Annual Partner Survey and periodic external Accompaniment Review.



Caritas Australia staff with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Learning



The A+ program supported the construction of a child care centre in this rural village in Malawi. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Goal

Caritas Australia is a vibrant, impact-focused organisation, committed to ongoing learning

Understanding our impact through evaluation and learning

We are committed to measuring what really matters – the outcomes and changes we see in the lives of those most vulnerable. Evaluations serve as a crucial pathway for our organisation and our partners to delve into the effectiveness of our joint initiatives, while also allowing us to directly hear from the communities engaged about the tangible impact these projects bring to their lives.

During the 2022-23 period, our funded programs underwent five external evaluations across diverse locations, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, and the Philippines. Additionally, we conducted a meta review that focused on gender equity, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) within our international development and humanitarian initiatives. These evaluations contribute to our continuous commitment to understanding, improving, and enhancing the positive change we strive to catalyse.



Members of banana winemaking group in the Blantyre region, southern Malawi. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Unlocking positive change: evaluation insights

Through these evaluations, some common trends and learnings have been generated that will help support the ongoing strengthening of our work.



Empowering through Strengths and Assets:

Adopting a Strengths-Based Approach (SBA) and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach has resulted in sustainable development and enhancement of self-belief among community members. The continued presence of other actors providing direct support delivers short-term benefits, however, this was proven to be a challenge that may harm communities' agency in the long term.



Collaboration fuels impact:

The power of collaboration and partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and community members was evident. This synergy not only enhanced program effectiveness but also extended its reach. Strengthening partnerships emerged as a key component of the collaborative ABCD approach, enabling our partners to complement and collaborate on existing programs.



Community participation and ownership:

The evaluations highlight the importance of involving communities in decision-making, planning, and implementation. This recognition and involvement in decision-making processes instilled a sense of pride and responsibility among the community members, motivating them to take on leadership roles and contribute to the development of their own communities.

Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion meta review:

In 2022, Caritas Australia engaged Learning4Development to undertake a review of our approach to Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) in our development and humanitarian programs. A total of 11 projects were reviewed, supported by consultations with staff and partners.

The review affirmed Caritas Australia's commitment to mainstreaming equity and inclusion across our work, while also highlighting several projects that demonstrated transformative outcomes linked to gender equity and disability inclusion. These included projects that actively engaged men and boys in supporting changes to gender norms, and targeted programs that were supporting people with disability to realise their rights.

The review also highlighted opportunities to strengthen our approach by:

- Continuing to build a more intersectional approach to gender, disability, and social inclusion
- Continuing to deepen connections and partnerships with rights-holders groups such as Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and women's organisations
- Further investing in staff and partners' capabilities in relation to gender equity, disability and social inclusion.

Several recommendations have since been actioned including the development of an introductory training for partners and a guidance note for key GEDSI considerations in project design. An action plan is in place to support ongoing practice improvement based on the findings of this review. The GEDSI meta review was supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Your Support



Students from the Sandhurst Diocese flip pancakes for Project Compassion. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Goal

Caritas Australia cultivates broad funding streams with a growing level of income.

Our highlights

Thanks to our generous supporters, **\$9.5 million** was raised through **Project Compassion**.

Our **Women for the World** campaign raised **\$730,000** to support vulnerable women across the world.

We received **\$4,805,669** in **Bequests** from incredibly generous lifetime supporters.

Over **\$1.7 million** was raised for the people of **Türkiye and Syria** and over **\$2.6 million** to support other emergencies including **Ukraine** and the **Africa Food Crisis**.



Project Compassion launch at Hargreaves Mall, Bendigo. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Schools and parishes come together to mark the start of Project Compassion 2023

In February 2023, many Parishes and schools across the country hosted a Project Compassion launch, where they heard from representatives from Caritas Australia about this year's stories, as well as the difference they are making in the lives of those who need it most.

In Perth, over 68 primary and secondary schools from four dioceses joined our Project Compassion launch, representing approximately 2,000 students from Years 6-12. Servite College and St Kieran Catholic Primary School served as phenomenal co-host schools, providing the IT know-how to facilitate an online webinar with Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson.

The season of Lent was in full swing at the Archdiocese of Brisbane launch for Project Compassion. With over 76 schools attending, it was a full house at St Stephen's Cathedral with many engaged students who enjoyed pancake races, chalk art (about faith, social justice and ecological justice) and a formation session with Caritas Australia Earthcare Coordinator Alice Carwardine.



Caritas Australia team at Project Compassion 2023 event at CommBank. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Project Compassion launch with CBA

Hosted by CommBank (CBA), Project Compassion 2023 was launched on Ash Wednesday inviting guests to reflect on the theme "For All Future Generations". Spanning across the six weeks of Lent each year, Project Compassion brings thousands of schools, parishes as well as the Australian community to raise funds for people living in some of the most vulnerable communities across the world.

The launch was a great opportunity for likeminded business and community leaders to come together to be inspired by stories of strength and resilience from communities around the globe.



Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson and her mother at Women for the World event. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Women for the World event raises over \$100,000 in one day

In November 2022, Caritas Australia hosted a Women for the World event in Sydney, raising an impressive \$106,000 in just one day.

Attendees had the opportunity to hear from Caritas Australia's CEO Kirsty Robertson, Impact Director Leigh Mathews and Acting Papua New Guinea Country Director Roslyn Kuniata about some of the people involved with our programs and their inspiring stories.

A highlight of the event was an interactive "competition" between three potential programs designed to help change lives for a better future for women and girls, in Papua New Guinea, Nepal and Zimbabwe. Guests were able to cast votes on their favourite program by ballot during the event. The Centre of Hope program, which provides protection services for woman at risk of gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea, was the winner.

Our People



Our Goal

Caritas Australia attracts and retains motivated staff and volunteers and nurtures effective partnerships.



Caritas Australia staff celebrate Thank You Day in the Sydney office. Photo: Caritas Australia.

The last year has seen exceptional work by our people and an unwavering commitment to our mission, with everyone going the extra mile to ensure the fulfillment of our strategic goals. In a world where compassion and empathy often take a backseat, our people stood up proving that dedication to our mission can drive transformative change.

Engaging our people

This year we conducted an all-staff engagement survey in which we asked our people about their level of connection and enthusiasm towards their work and Caritas Australia. People who are highly engaged at work show high levels of motivation and commitment to their organisation, and experience better quality of life at work.

Engagement survey key results:

- **84%** participation rate across the organisation
- Staff engagement score of **76%**
- **86%** of our people feel that the mission of Caritas Australia is well communicated
- **88%** of our people said that their work allowed them to make a positive difference

Each department has committed to an action plan and reports regularly on their progress toward building the best organisation we can be for the people we serve.

We will conduct these surveys annually to continue to measure and build on these high levels of engagement.

Reflecting on our values

Throughout the year, our people were invited to reflect on one of our core values: Courage. Several workshops were held around the value and staff were encouraged to share stories of where they had seen courage in their daily lives – from the field to the office or in the wider community. Each person was tasked with creating a goal around this value and committed to demonstrating it in their work on a regular basis.

Innovation to build our capability

This year Caritas Australia conducted an Innovation Training program with a group of leaders from across the agency. Participants learnt valuable skills - from ideation techniques to effective problem-solving approaches - that not only enhanced their individual capabilities, but also fostered a culture of innovation across the agency. The investment in innovation training has created a wave of collective creative thinking which will propel our organisation forward, becoming a driving force to achieve our strategic goals.

Volunteers

We acknowledge the support of our many volunteers who assist Caritas Australia and we would like to thank them all for the amazing and vital role they play in our organisation. We could not deliver the work we do without their commitment.

Our Impact

143 staff in **5** countries

Offices in:

Australia, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste

We have **113** employees based in Australia, **28** staff in country with **3** expatriates

Gender balance for Australia-based staff is **70% female** and **30% male**. In-country staff is **39% female** and **61% male**

Farewell after 17 years of service

After a remarkable 17 years, Caritas Australia said farewell to Michael Peyra, Senior Coordinator for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Pacific. During his time at Caritas Australia, Michael worked in multiple roles, mainly in programs in Asia and the Pacific. **“Caritas Australia has provided a ‘home’ to me...It has been that place of purpose and of connection for me,”** said Michael. We thank Michael for all his hard work and incredible support of our country offices over the years.

Cristiane Miura, Supporter Retention Manager, participates in Thank You Day activity. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Advocacy



Director of Caritas Papua New Guinea, Mavis Tito, and Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, at the launch event of the Twin Clouds report in Papua New Guinea. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Goal

Caritas Australia inspires all Australians, especially the Catholic community, to advocate and act.

Twin Clouds report: climate adaptation and finance

Caritas Oceania and Jubilee Australia Research Centre released a climate finance report: “Twin clouds on the horizon: averting a combined climate and debt crisis in the Pacific through locally-delivered climate finance”.

The report called on Australia to lead the international community in strengthening the ability of Pacific nations to withstand the impacts of climate change, through restructuring debt, improving access to climate finance and funding the Pacific Resilience Facility.

“The real challenge for the world is to listen to us. To see with their eyes, and listen with their ears, to those on the frontlines of climate change,” said His Eminence Soane Patita Paini Mafi, Caritas Oceania Regional President.



Caritas Australia's Advocacy Associate Director, Dr Damian Spruce (far right), presenting the Twin Clouds report to the Australian Ambassador for Climate Change, Kristin Tilley, at COP 27 in Egypt. Photo: Caritas Australia.

COP 27: Loss and damage fund to support the least responsible for climate change

A key question for the 27th United Nations climate summit, which took place in Egypt in November 2022, was ‘Who should pay the costs of global warming?’. Representing Caritas Oceania, Dr Damian Spruce, Caritas Australia’s Advocacy Associate Director, met with key representatives from across the globe to discuss this and other pressing climate issues affecting the world and, more specifically, our region.

Research commissioned by Caritas Australia to coincide with COP27 found that climate change is the biggest concern for most young Australians, and that nine in ten Australians believe the biggest polluters should pay for the impacts of climate change. **“This shows that the vast majority of Australians really care about the impacts of climate change, and that they want action on the climate injustice of the least responsible for climate change paying the price for wealthy nations’ actions,”** said Damian.

Catholic agencies including the Caritas Internationalis network, celebrated the historic Loss and Damage deal at the end of COP 27 with governments agreeing to set up a Loss and Damage fund to support countries that have contributed least to the climate crisis.

One Journey, Together for an informed decision on the Voice to Government

Caritas Australia supported our partner the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) in developing the One Journey, Together campaign. The campaign helps Catholic Australians to make an informed decision in the 2023 referendum on constitutional recognition for First Nations Peoples through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Government.

The One Journey, Together website collates statements and resources, grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, to help people in their process of discernment.



Help Fight Famine campaign tackles global hunger crisis

Caritas Australia joined many of Australia’s leading aid and development organisations to urge the Australian Government to help prevent a humanitarian crisis.

Coordinated by the Australian Council for International Development and Micah Australia, the campaign urged the Australian Government to do our part in responding to the global hunger crisis through implementing an urgent Famine Prevention Package, investing long-term in a targeted Global Food Security Strategy, and strengthening resilience of the Asia and Pacific region to climate change, disasters and economic shocks by increasing Australia’s development assistance.

Help Fight Famine advocacy was supported by research conducted by Caritas Australia, which found that 70 per cent of Australians believe the global community should do more to support people living in poverty. The campaign succeeded in generating more than \$70 million in funding for the global hunger crisis from the Australian Government.

Above image: Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, joined by Caritas Australia Diocesan Director, Tracey Tessitore, and Diocesan Coordinator, Kerry Stone, at visit to Parliament House as part of the Help Fight Famine campaign. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Community

Kirsty and Richard cycle north for Caritas Ks

Caritas Australia's CEO, Kirsty Robertson, and Advancement Director, Richard Landels, completed an epic 700 km bicycle ride from Cairns to Townsville, as part of Caritas Ks for Compassion. During their journey, Kirsty and Richard made stops in various towns where they met with local school students and parishioners to share stories of how Caritas Australia and its partners are working to support communities around the world.

"The ride is one thing but, as always, it is the people along the way who have made this journey special. It is such a blessing to make new friends and meet new people and spread the word about Caritas Australia," said Kirsty. Kirsty and Richard were pleased to have completed the ride with a mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Townsville where Bishop Timothy Harris and the congregation offered their prayers and support.



Kirsty and Richard during their cycling journey. Photo: Caritas Australia.



Caritas Australia Timor-Leste Country Representative Fernando Pires, Bishop Richard Umbers, Fr Lucio de Deus, Vicar General, Maliana Diocese and Kirsty Robertson stand outside offices of the Diocese of Maliana. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Visit to Timor-Leste

In February 2023, Bishop Richard Umbers (Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Sydney), a delegation from the Archdiocese of Sydney, Caritas Australia staff and our in-country team in Timor-Leste travelled to Baucau and Maliana in Timor-Leste to see some of the amazing programs being carried out in the country. The team visited one of the women's shelters supported by Caritas Australia in partnership with Caritas Baucau. Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO, remarked: *"it was both heartbreaking and inspiring to hear the stories of the women who seek refuge there - hoping for a new life of safety and peace."* Caritas Australia works with 13 local partners in protection programs in Timor-Leste, providing protection through accommodation, specialist support, and support through savings and loans activities so that women can gain financial autonomy.



Caritas Australia staff with First Australian Partners. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Together with our First Australians partners to create change

Caritas Australia had the privilege of meeting face-to-face with our First Australian partners, including Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, Djilpin Arts and Aboriginal Carbon Foundation. This meeting was an opportunity for us to listen, learn and hear from our First Australian partners about their challenges and aspirations. The theme of the event was Accompaniment, which means walking side-by-side with our program partners, supporting them and following their lead. By accompanying our partners and working together, we can create meaningful change and amplify the voices of First Nations people. The partners meeting also provided a chance to discuss and seek feedback on Caritas Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan and First Australians Program Strategy.



10 actions to celebrate Laudato Si' week

In May 2023, Catholic Earthcare Australia hosted an online 'Action' event to celebrate Laudato Si' week. 140 registrants were invited to engage in 10 actions designed to help bring forth an Integral Ecology and care for creation. All 10 actions were inspired by Laudato Si' week's theme 'Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity'. As part of the ongoing commitment to the Laudato Si' Action Platform, Catholic Earthcare Australia is working with over 300 schools, 80 parishes and 30 families on their journey towards achieving integral ecology, promoting opportunities for reflection about our role as protectors of creation and the poor.

Our Diocesan Network

Caritas Australia's network of Diocesan Directors, committees and volunteers across the country is essential to help us communicate our work and Mission deep within the Australia community. Mostly volunteers, they regularly engage with the local Diocesan Parishes, schools, Catholic networks and the broader Australian community.

In 2022-23 our Diocesan Directors were:

National

Diocesan Director, Maronite Eparchy
Rev Fr Tony Sarkis

Diocesan Director, Ukrainian Eparchy of Australia
Archpriest Michael Kalka
Fr Iurii Tychenok

Australian Capital Territory

Diocesan Director, Canberra & Goulburn
Beth Doherty

South Australia

Diocesan Director, Adelaide
Tracey Tessitore

Diocesan Director, Port Pirie
Mary Manning

Tasmania

Diocesan Director, Hobart
Michael Smith

New South Wales

Diocesan Director, Sydney
Chris Nolan

Diocesan Director, Armidale
Georgina Franklin

Diocesan Director, Bathurst
Rev Deacon Josh Clayton

Diocesan Director, Broken Bay
Vacant

Diocesan Director, Lismore
Rev Deacon Graeme Davis

Diocesan Director, Maitland-Newcastle
Teresa Brierley

Diocesan Director, Parramatta
Sebastian Salaske-Lentem

Diocesan Director, Wagga Wagga
Vacant

Diocesan Director, Wilcannia-Forbes
Sr Elizabeth Young and Trish Cleal

Diocesan Director, Wollongong
Kerrie Hennessy

Victoria

Diocesan Director, Melbourne
Romina Martiniello and Gwen Michener

Diocesan Director, Ballarat
Jillian Hogbin

Diocesan Director, Sale
Vacant

Diocesan Director, Sandhurst
Fr Rom Hayes

Diocesan Coordinator, Sandhurst
Kerry Stone

Western Australia

Diocesan Director, Perth
Rev Deacon Paul Reid

Diocesan Director, Broome
Aidan Mitchell

Diocesan Director, Bunbury
Peter Williams

Diocesan Director, Geraldton
Rosemary Taylor

Queensland

Diocesan Director, Brisbane
Andrew Knife

Diocesan Director, Cairns
Vacant

Diocesan Director, Rockhampton
Angela Wilczek

Diocesan Director, Toowoomba
Vacant

Diocesan Director, Townsville
Neil Helmore

Northern Territory

Diocesan Director, Darwin
Rev Deacon Tony Cunningham

Our Year



Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, meet with community member in Northern Ethiopia. Photo: Caritas Australia.

From the field: 10 days in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is facing its worst drought in nearly 40 years, with an estimated 20 million people in need of urgent assistance. Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, and Advancement Director, Richard Landels, went on a 10-day journey to Ethiopia to meet with communities affected by the food crisis and displaced people who had fled conflict zones.

"I met communities already on the brink of starvation, with almost no options left to feed themselves and their families. I met women who walk over 18 hours to get water, knowing that they have very little or even nothing to feed their children once they return," said Kirsty. *"These horrifying conditions are some of the worst I have seen in over 20 years in this sector."*

Caritas Australia's partners are working in remote and inaccessible parts of Ethiopia, experiencing the daily struggles with the communities, and providing support through food distributions, clean drinking water, cash transfers, and hygiene supplies.

"Even though it was truly heartbreaking for us to witness the struggle that the people of Ethiopia are currently facing, seeing the work of our partners, Caritas Ethiopia, as well as the determination of the Catholic Church in accessing the most marginalised and the poorest of the poor, was indeed a glimmer of hope," said Richard.



Uncle Bobby (#24), Christine Rhazi (Caritas Australia's First Australians Associate Director) and Uncle Roger (#12). Photo: Serena Frost/Caritas Australia.

Stories of survival on Sorry Day

This National Sorry Day, Caritas Australia joined forces with our partner Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) to host a webinar to raise awareness and reflect on how we can all play a part in the healing process for our people and nation.

Schools, parishes and supporters were invited to attend and hear about the work of KBHAC, as well as the survival stories of Uncle Roger (#12) and Uncle Bobby (#24). *"They stole my culture, my identity,"* said Uncle Roger, *"they even took my name away. I became Number 12."*

Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from Caritas Australia's First Australians Associate Director, Christine Rhazi, and learn about the importance of educating communities about their experiences. KBHAC is one of the most notorious institutions associated with the Stolen Generations. It seeks to address the multigenerational trauma that impacts survivors, families and descendants.



Caritas Australia CEO, Kirsty Robertson, during the 22nd General Assembly in Rome. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Caritas Australia CEO Kirsty Robertson elected Vice President of Caritas Internationalis

Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO, was elected Vice President of Caritas Internationalis during the 22nd General Assembly in Rome. Kirsty will serve the Confederation over the next four years across 162 national Caritas member organisations. *"As a confederation we are committed to serving women in villages, parishes, and communities, but also in leadership. My appointment today reflects that commitment,"* said Kirsty. Alistair Dutton, Executive Director of SCIAF (Caritas Scotland), was elected as Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis. The elections of Alistair and Kirsty came two days after Archbishop of Tokyo, Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi, was elected as the new President of Caritas Internationalis.



Blessing of Sydney office by Archbishop Mark Coleridge. Photo: Jared Weedon/Caritas Australia.

Blessing of new Sydney Office

In November 2022, Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane led our staff and volunteers in a Blessing of the new Sydney office in Mascot. The event included a Welcome to Country by Aunty Maxine Ryan, before Archbishop Coleridge led in prayer, then blessing the office space. On the same day, Archbishop Coleridge was also formally appointed as a Director on Caritas Australia's Board. *"I am delighted to be welcomed onto the Caritas Australia Board,"* said Archbishop Coleridge. *"Project Compassion has always been close to my heart, and I've always appreciated the way that Caritas Australia helps to unite our Church community through our shared faith, and to strengthen our connection with dioceses, parishes and schools across the country."*

A special visit to Zimbabwe and Mozambique

Sister Ivy Khoury, Caritas Australia's Africa Programs Coordinator, visited Zimbabwe and Mozambique to reconnect with some of the people supported through Project Compassion. Almost six years ago, Caritas Australia met a remarkable young girl named Thandolwayo in Zimbabwe. She was just 12 years old at the time, and would walk seven kilometres through difficult terrain every day to collect contaminated water for her family.

Through Caritas Australia's partnership with Caritas Hwange, the community was able to install two solar-powered pumps and a 10,000 litre water tank. Today, Thandolwayo is a confident 16-year-old girl who is excelling in her studies. *"What a joy to see Thandolwayo again. I couldn't believe that she now speaks fluent English,"* said Sister Ivy. *"I feel very blessed to be given the opportunity to see first-hand all the lasting change Caritas Australia supports every day for our fantastic partners in the region,"* said Sister Ivy.



Sister Ivy reconnects with Thandolwayo in Zimbabwe. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Our Governance

Caritas Australia is governed as a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and its activities are overseen by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. Caritas Australia is a member of both the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Fundraising Institute of Australia (FIA) and is therefore signatories to both Codes of Conduct. As a Member Organisation, Caritas Australia follows the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards.

As members of Caritas Australia, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) oversee the activities of the organisation in the areas of justice, ecology, international aid and development, and peace.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 1 December 2022.

Our Leadership Team

Caritas Australia's Leadership Team drives the strategic direction of the organisation as well as the day to day operational management and work to ensure the strategic goals and the change that we want to see both within ourselves, and in the world are achieved. They bring a breadth of knowledge and experience coupled with passion and commitment that creates a culture that lives our values of Partnership, Courage, Stewardship and Compassion.



Kirsty Robertson

Chief Executive Officer
Appointed: 2019



Rocky Naickar

Chief Finance and Operation Officer
Appointed: 2013



Richard Landels

Advancement Director
Appointed: 2018



Michael McGirr

Mission Facilitator
Appointed: 2021



Alicia Benardos

People Director
Appointed: 2020



Dan Skehan

Programs Director
Appointed: 2021



Leigh Matthews

Impact Director
Appointed: 2022

More detailed profiles can be found here: www.caritas.org.au/about/what-is-caritas/our-leadership-team/

Our Board

Caritas Australia's Board is comprised of dedicated and experienced individuals who guide our Strategic Direction, oversee governance, monitor accountability and ensure that the organisation lives and achieves its Mission.



Robert Fitzgerald AM
Chair

Appointed:
March 2020



Archbishop Mark Coleridge
Director

Appointed:
November 2022
Member - Mission, People and Culture Committee



Virginia Bourke
Director

Appointed:
March 2020
Chair - Mission, People and Culture Committee



Jack de Groot
Director

Appointed:
October 2020
Member - Programs and Impact Committee



Patricia Faulkner AO
Director

Appointed:
July 2020
Member - Audit, Finance and Risk Committee



Christine Grima
Director

Appointed:
July 2020
Chair - Programs and Impact Committee



Dr. Martin Laverty
Director

Appointed:
March 2020



Wendy Hughes
Director

Appointed:
July 2020
Chair - Audit, Finance and Risk Committee



The Honourable John Watkins AM
Director

Appointed:
November 2020
Resigned:
December 2022

Our Board sub-committees

In 2022-23 the following sub-committees supported the Board:

The **Audit, Finance and Risk Committee** provides guidance to Caritas Australia's management related to independent external audit and financial standing and reporting. This includes the investment portfolio and the ongoing development of the agency's risk management framework.

The **Mission, People and Culture Committee** is responsible for providing guidance to Caritas Australia's management related to People and Culture, including staff engagement, recruitment, and retention strategies. This committee also assists with strategic oversight of Mission Integration initiatives.

The **Programs and Impact Committee** provides guidance to Caritas Australia's management related to the design and implementation of our international aid development and programs. This committee also provides oversight and strategic input to the delivery of our Impact Framework.

In 2023, our board was also supported by the establishment of a **Nominations Committee** to advise the Board in making decisions and to provide recommendations to the Board and its committees. This includes establishing and reviewing Board and Board committee succession plans.

More detailed profiles can be found here: www.caritas.org.au/about/what-is-caritas/our-board/

Our Financials

The 2022-23 was the first full-financial year without any pandemic restrictions, however the high inflation and interest rates have had an impact on the overall fundraising income.

The full year ended with a planned deficit of \$8.8 million, which was supported by the use of internal reserves. A total of \$32.7 million was spent in funding our development and domestic programs and responding to natural disasters and humanitarian crisis.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The year ended with total income at \$45.8 million and total expenditure at \$54.6 million, creating a deficit of \$8.8 million.

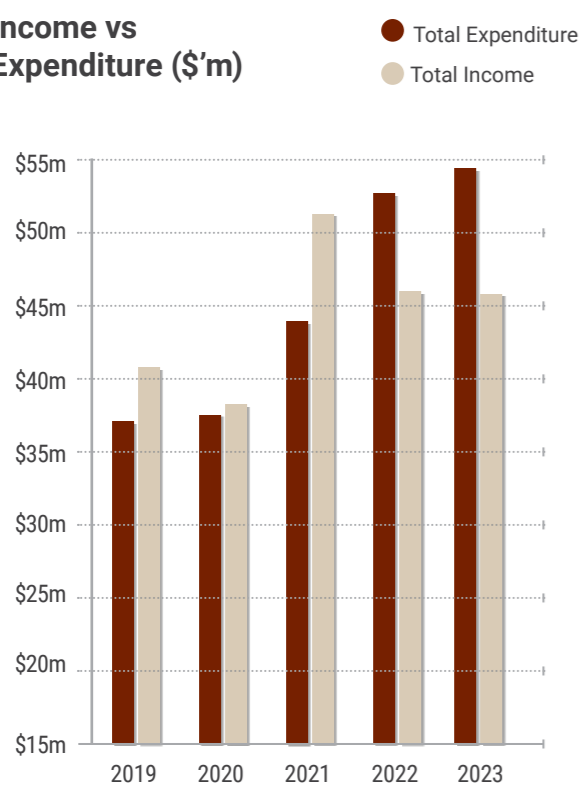
The planned deficit spending is guided by Board approved management plan to increase our investment in our program priority areas and continue with our fundraising initiatives.

These investments are necessary for the organisation to develop diversified income and funding models to increase funding for our international programs, ensuring organisational sustainability into the future. Funding allocation to our programs grew by \$1.8 million to \$32.7 million over the prior year.

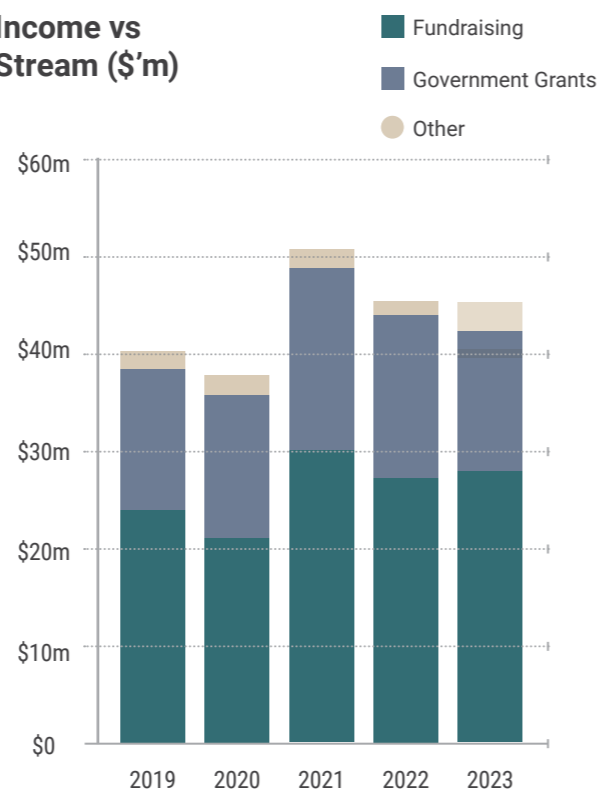
Fundraising remains the primary source of income receiving close to \$28.1 million. Income from our fundraising activities (excluding emergency appeals) grew by 11 per cent to prior year as a result of the ongoing generosity of our donors.

This contributes to approximately 62 per cent of our total organisational income, with recurrent and one-off government grants contributing close to 32 per cent, and 7 per cent from other income (bank interest and earnings from managed funds held with JB Were and Macquarie).

Income vs Expenditure (\$'m)



Income vs Stream (\$'m)



Caritas Australia is the lead agency of the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) and receives DFAT grants on behalf of the member organisations. In 2022-23, Caritas Australia received \$4.9 million in grants for the CAN DO Consortium.

ORGANISATION STRENGTH AND SUPPORT

Caritas Australia is committed to ensuring operational decisions are supported by strong governance and prudent use of available resources. This is achieved by maintaining a reasonably low fundraising ratio of 15.3 per cent (fundraising cost as % of total income) and administration ratio of 7.3 per cent (admin costs as % of total income).

The increase in these ratios is a combination of the planned deficit to fund core operations from general reserves, and the temporary increase from investments in fundraising initiatives.

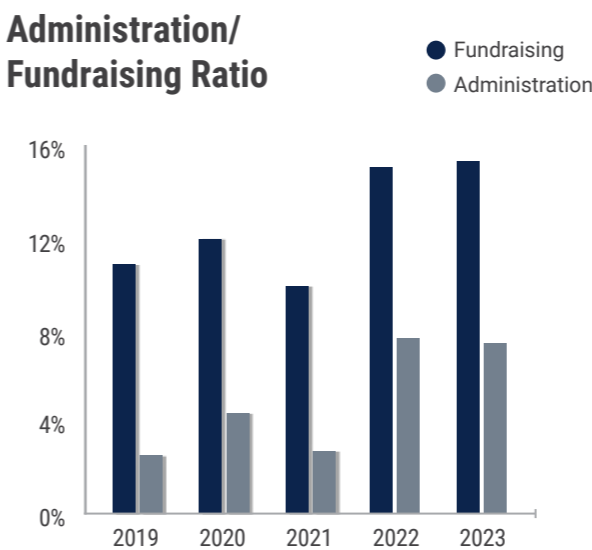
In 2022-23, additional network security procedures were implemented to strengthen the organisation capabilities to manage and mitigate global trend in cyber related incidents.

The annual cyber audit, which reviews the organisations capacity to mitigate and withstand cyber incidents, placed the organisation well above the best practice benchmark and well above the sector ratings.

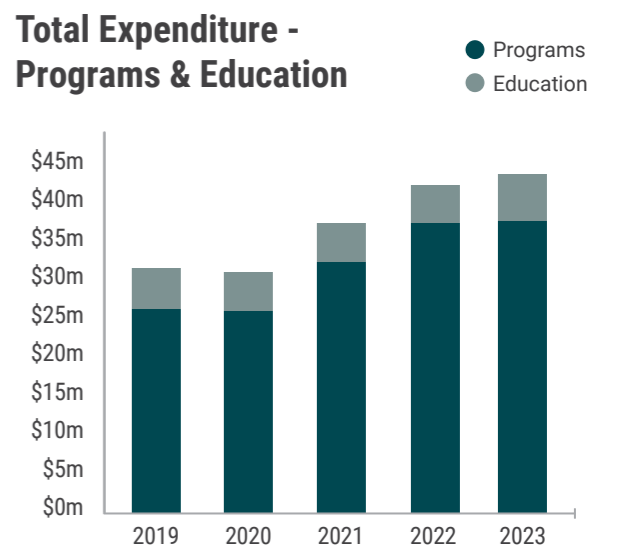
In line with the organisation's strategic direction, funding towards our program's expenditure has been increasing since 2020, and in 2023 the increase was 6 per cent (\$1.8m) over the year before. In the last four years, investment in program funding has grown at an annual compounded growth rate of 15 per cent.

Savings and under expenditure from expense management or deferred projects are reallocated towards existing and one-off program initiatives.

Administration/ Fundraising Ratio



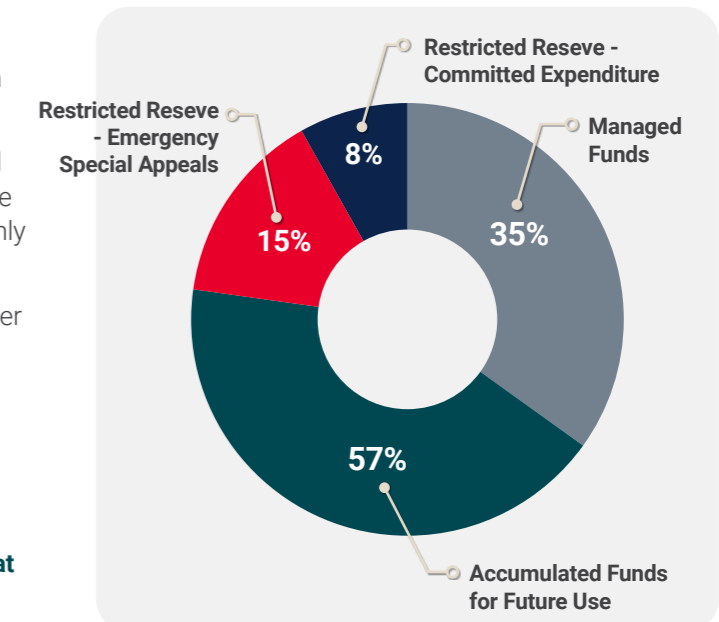
Total Expenditure - Programs & Education



EQUITY: Accumulated funds or unrestricted reserve are funds which have no conditions attached and can be used at the discretion of Caritas Australia.

Unspent government grants and income from special appeals make the committed and specific expenditure reserve and the use of funds are restricted and can only be used for the purpose it was provided.

Managed funds are held with fund managers for longer term organisational sustainability and can be drawn upon to support core activities, if required.



Our full Financial Report 2022-23 is available to read at www.caritas.org.au/publications/annual-reports/

Your Compassion



Local students at a school in Cambodia. Photo: Caritas Australia.

Thank you for your generosity and support.

Corporate partners

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Dunmarra Pty Ltd
Catholic Healthcare
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Ways to Get Involved



Laxmi and her mother Mahkala outside their home in western Nepal.
Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.

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Our Accountability

DFAT

Caritas Australia is accredited by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), responsible for managing Australia's aid program. To maintain accreditation, Caritas Australia's systems, policies and processes are rigorously reviewed by the Australian Government. In 2022-23, we received support from the Australian government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program, the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, and the Church Partnership Program.

ACFID

Caritas Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, which is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. As a signatory we are committed and fully adhere to the ACFID Code of Conduct, conducting our work with transparency, accountability and integrity. For more information on the Code, visit the ACFID website www.acfid.asn.au or email code@acfid.asn.au.

Codes and Standards

We uphold the highest standards of practice, as demonstrated by our commitment to the:

- ACFID Code of Conduct
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Standards
- Caritas Internationalis Management Standards
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, as part of Caritas Internationalis
- The Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)
- Fundraising Institute of Australia Principles and Standards of Fundraising Practice
- Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles
- Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards
- We have also adopted and implemented the international standards of risk management, ISO 31000.

Funding

Caritas Australia generates income from various streams including the Australian Government, emergency action alliance, public donations, and investments. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Australian Government.

Charity Status

Caritas Australia is endorsed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome feedback about our organisation. To provide feedback or make a complaint, call 1800 024 413, write to Caritas Australia, GPO Box 9630 in your capital city or go to www.caritas.org.au/complaints/ to see other options, including how to make an anonymous complaint. Complaints alleging breaches of the ACFID Code of Conduct can also be made to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee via www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints.

Privacy Policy

In line with the Privacy Act 1988 and the legislation changes in March 2014, Caritas Australia is committed to ensuring that we not only meet the legal requirements but also establish a culture of good practice regarding personal information about supporters. Read our full privacy policy at www.caritas.org.au/privacy/.

Solicitors

Makinson d'Apice Lawyers

Bank

Commonwealth Bank of Australia


Auditors


Pitcher Partners





**The Catholic Agency for
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