

**Media Release**  
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### COMPASSION LEADS TO POWERFUL ACTION FOR OUR GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS

In support of the world's poor, including millions in our immediate region, thousands of school children, teachers, churches and community leaders across Australia are putting their compassion into action, during Caritas Australia's Project Compassion.

The World Bank estimates that 90 million people live in extreme poverty in Australia's neighbouring region. Another 300 million are vulnerable to falling back into poverty due to natural disasters, climate change, disease and economic shocks.

Project Compassion funds humanitarian and long-term development programs in more than 29 countries across Asia, Africa, the Pacific, Latin America and First Australian communities. It runs over Lent, the six weeks leading up to Easter, starting on Ash Wednesday (March 1). Last year Project Compassion raised \$11.1 million.

Through this year's theme "Love your neighbour," Caritas Australia demonstrates how this approach can transform lives.

"Caritas Australia has worked with partner agencies overseas and in First Australian communities to assist those communities lift themselves out of poverty. We have transformed millions of lives in the process, including over 2 million people directly last year through our emergency and development programs," said Paul O'Callaghan, Caritas Australia's CEO.

Focused on our "Love your neighbour" theme, Caritas Australia will feature human stories from the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Australia, Vietnam and Fiji.

"I encourage you to support Project Compassion because your donations make a big difference to our capacity to help impoverished communities become stronger and more resilient. This can only lead to a better future for our world," said Mr O'Callaghan.

During Lent, Australians are invited to support Project Compassion by making a donation, or by hosting fundraising events in their local school, parish, community or neighbourhood. Supporters can also share their stories on social media at #ProjectCompassion.

To donate to Project Compassion or for fundraising ideas visit [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phone 1800 024 413.

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