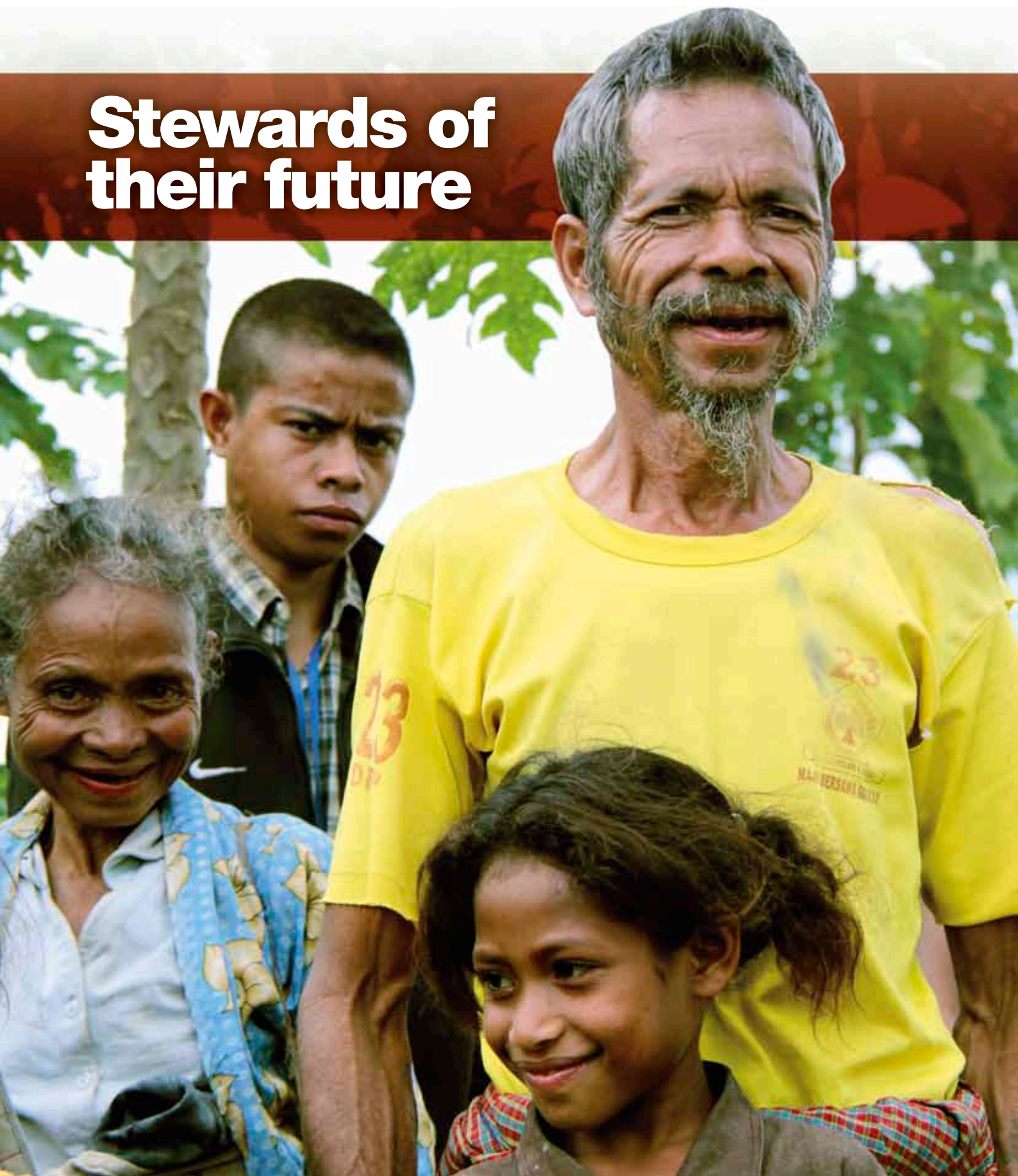


# Caritasnews

No 126  
Spring 2011

## Stewards of their future



## FROM THE CEO



IN THIS SPRING edition of *CaritasNews* it seems only natural that we explore our sacred relationship with Creation. As we work together for justice in our world's poorest communities, we must not forget to tend to the delicate environments that nourish us in our daily lives.

In his most recent encyclical – *Caritas in Veritate* – Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that: “the environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”

At Caritas Australia, we believe that our responsibility towards the protection of human dignity is inextricably linked to our responsibility towards Creation. In each community we serve, we see that genuine and lasting change hinges upon our commitment to sustainable development.

In many parts of the world, we see that suffering often derives from a poverty of natural resources. With your support, Caritas Australia assists communities to re-examine their relationship with Creation: to experiment with new planting methods; to fish more sustainably; and to understand the climate that impacts upon their health and livelihoods.

In other communities, we see people suffering from the richness of their resources. In places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, the struggle to control the land and its offerings begets cruel violence, robbing people of their livelihoods and sacred dignity. Together it is our role to champion respect not only for human life but also for the shared environment.

Tragically, we all too often see suffering at the hands of natural disaster. Bolstered by your solidarity, the most vulnerable communities have the opportunity to build back better and are increasingly resilient in the face of tomorrow’s challenges.

Where there is discord between communities and Creation, there can never be lasting and authentic human development. But as you continue to support Caritas Australia as a steward of God’s Creation, you take us a step closer towards God’s vision of a just world.

*Jack de Groot*

Jack de Groot, CEO



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## Thankyou

“We thank you for caring for us from so far away. Here we will continue to work together and help each other more effectively. You have made this possible and we thank you all. God bless you.” KALARUM



You contributed almost \$10 million to Project Compassion. For many Australian communities, 2011 was a year characterised by devastation, yet your generosity made Project Compassion 2011 our best appeal yet.

Thank you to all those who dedicated their time and efforts to our appeal this year, and to each and every person who helped us raise an astounding \$9.7 million. Congratulations to the Dioceses of Broken Bay, Wollongong, Melbourne, Sandhurst, Brisbane, Rockhampton, Cairns, Perth, Hobart and Canberra, who achieved their best ever result for Project Compassion in 2011.

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## Tell us what YOU think!

IN THIS EDITION of *CaritasNews*, you'll notice something a little different – a survey. We know you love to hear how your money is making a difference around the world, but do you love the way we share those stories with you?

On pages 7-10 of this edition you have the chance to tell us what you like, what you love, and what you think we could do better. This is your opportunity to tell us what's important to you; after all, you make our work possible – so your opinion is important to us.

Your feedback will help us better understand what motivates you to support Caritas Australia, and what inspires you about our work. By completing this survey we can improve the way we share stories with you, and do more to inspire other Australians who share your commitment to social justice.

Your privacy is of upmost importance to us so you can choose to complete the survey anonymously. However if you'd like to receive feedback about the results of our research or you'd like us to contact you about Caritas Australia's work in your community and abroad, please leave your details for us on page 10.

You can complete the survey in hard-copy by removing the 4-page insert and returning it to us by post. Or you can provide your responses online by visiting [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) and following the links.

Thank you for supporting Caritas Australia – we look forward to hearing what you think.



# East Africa CRISIS APPEAL

*"If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world. In the Eucharist we receive Christ hungering in the world. He comes to us not alone, but with the poor, the oppressed, the starving of the earth."* PEDRO ARRUIPE SJ, 1976.

THE DROUGHT AND food insecurity that engulfs East Africa is the most severe humanitarian crisis in the world today. More than 12 million people throughout Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania are in urgent need of food, water and basic necessities. Up to 40 percent of children in the region are suffering from severe malnutrition – the time for action is now.

With frightening images emerging from the region, The United Nations has declared the situation a Food Crisis, with some communities now experiencing famine. The drought in East Africa is not expected to ease until early 2012 and the numbers of vulnerable people affected will rise dramatically.

Over the coming three to four months, the region's fragile food security will continue to deteriorate; the most vulnerable communities are preparing for below-average summer harvests, early depletion of pasture and water, and continued high prices of food, water and fuel.

Across the region, the humanitarian needs have been estimated at USD

1.7 billion; nowhere near that amount has been collected worldwide. Caritas Australia has launched the East Africa Crisis Appeal and we need your help!

In partnership with the international Caritas network, our relief effort is underway with local partners responding to the communities' immediate needs – food, water, basic supplies, and agricultural assistance in severely affected areas of Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Through Caritas Australia's East Africa Crisis Appeal, you can help provide food relief, clean water and basic necessities, and help the most vulnerable families to maintain their livelihoods in this time of crisis. For more information or to donate please visit [www.caritas.org.au/eastafricacrisis](http://www.caritas.org.au/eastafricacrisis); call 1800 024 413; or post your donations to GPO Box 9830 Sydney NSW 2001.

### Where will your funds go?

All funds raised through the appeal will be spent in assisting vulnerable people in East Africa. Caritas Australia commits to deliver at least 92 percent of all funds raised to the local partners and communities directly.



# Green gold fro

Just two short years ago, Dubesi – a remote village of West Timor – was notoriously crooked. Try to hold a community meeting after daylight hours and sure enough you'd leave the gathering a few possessions lighter.

“AS SOON AS it got dark things could go missing,” recall Caritas partners, Joseph and Vincent from Yayasan Mitra Tani Mandiri (YMTM).

“If you parked a car outside the village hall while having a meeting, the car could go missing and people even used to do gambling at the back of the hall.

“The village had a history of being full of criminals and yet, we've turned that around.”

Caritas Australia has been supporting the innovative Foundation for Partnership with Independent Farmers in West Timor (YMTM), since 2004. The YMTM initiative was founded more than 20 years ago by a group of uni students who believed that their study of agricultural science could be used to achieve social justice.

“As students, we felt it just wasn't sufficient to do research so we formed a group that did agro-forestry training with villages.

“In the first three or four years we didn't have any money, we just lived in the villages to run discussions, and the local people provided us with some food.”

Today YMTM is working in 98 villages across five districts in West Timor and Flores. For its work in some of Indonesia's most vulnerable communities, YMTM has achieved both national and international acclaim. In 2010, YMTM was awarded the United Nations Development Program's Equator Prize for poverty reduction and environmental conservation; its entrepreneurial programs, innovative agricultural techniques and

irrigation methods have enabled poor communities to transform once dry, barren land into productive, agricultural farmland.

So what does all of this have to do with the crime rate in Dubesi?

Two years ago Barnabas was well established as the Dubesi village thief. He tended a meagre garden and stole what he could to provide for his family of 11. For Barnabas and his children, life in Dubesi was uncertain and riddled with risk.

When we met Barnabas earlier this year, his life couldn't have been more different. Rather than 'head of the thieves', Barnabas was head of his local farming group and his thriving garden now produces more than enough to support a happy and healthy family.

Of his new life, Barnabas says: “if I steal, it's easy but the money is quickly gone. I needed to learn to become a good farmer.

“When YMTM first came to our village we had a meeting to discuss our challenges, and then our next step was to build [garden] terraces.

“If I steal,  
it’s easy but  
the money  
is quickly  
gone. I  
needed to  
learn to  
become  
a good  
farmer.”

# m dry land

“We also built bamboo structures to hold up the plants; we prepared seedlings; and after the rains we were able to harvest some crops like papaya, banana and cassava.

“Since YMTM has come, we’ve produced many different kinds of plants. From some we’ve been able to gain short term profits and others are long-term plants that we hope will be able to support our future in this village.

“With the products we have produced over the last two years we were able to buy kerosene for our lamps and were able to pay for our children’s school; we’re also part of a savings and loans scheme organised by YMTM in our village.”

Barnabas and the members of his farming group are just some of the hundreds of people you have helped through YMTM’s unique, grassroots

approach to community programs. It is the spirit of partnership that underpins YMTM’s work that truly helps communities to help themselves.

“Most of our staff is based in the villages. They live there, year round – this is one thing that distinguishes our approach,” Vincent explains.

“The people that we work with are very marginalised people; if you approach them as an outsider it is often difficult to communicate with them and to understand the conditions in the village.

“Our staff actually live in the village, the village chooses them and they become villagers themselves. They understand the conditions: they can work alongside the local people whether in the fields or with each household.

“With Barnabas I’m sure he changed because of the relationship with YMTM staff – they spent a lot of time with him. He also did an exchange to another district and learnt the different methods being used there.”

For YMTM, the health of communities is linked to the health of the land and of the local environment. Working in close partnership with Barnabas and his farming group, YMTM have not only enabled community members to generate a bona fide income – but also to be faithful stewards of the environmental resources that will ensure a better future for their children.

“If you look at Barnabas’ garden now, it is much, much better than it was. But more than that, his garden is a great source of pride for him; he’s felt very proud to show it to other people,” says Vincent.

“We work with the poor to address the many challenges they face with a range of activities, including health and environmental education, agricultural training, development of farmer institutions and advocacy to local government. In the end, these issues are all connected.”

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Throughout West Timor’s vulnerable farming communities, YMTM’s environmental management programs create opportunities for generations to come. By supporting Caritas Australia today or remembering us in your will, you too can leave a legacy of compassion for the poorest of the poor in our global family.



# After the deluge: a year of support for Pakistan

Just a few short weeks ago, the world stopped to remember those lives lost to Pakistan's worst floods in eight decades.



WITH THE IMAGES so vivid in our memories, it's hard to believe it has been a year since we looked on in horror as flood waters smothered one-fifth of Pakistan, decimating roads and bridges, inundating farmland, and washing away markets, schools and homes.

Two thousand lives were lost in last year's monsoons and more than 20 million people were affected by widespread damage to community infrastructure and the agricultural sector. But with your support before, during and after the headlines, Pakistan's worst affected communities have had the opportunity to build back better.

In the weeks and months following the floods, you gave almost \$3 million to ensure the protection of human life and dignity in Pakistan's flooded communities. With your support and generosity, the international Caritas network was not only able to supply urgent medical, food and shelter assistance, but has also begun to facilitate new farming and income-generation opportunities to outlast the emergency relief effort.

As floodwaters ravaged communities across Pakistan, Caritas Australia's partners mobilised a rapid response that saw upwards of 300,000 people access food, shelter, blankets, and cookware to see them through the worst. With access to health services and the sanitation infrastructure necessary to stem the spread of water-borne diseases, the Caritas network ensured assistance to thousands of families, and enabled the reconstruction of more

than 400 vital water schemes, roads and bridges. Protected by an international community of *caritas*, human dignity was not lost in Pakistan's deluge.

With hundreds of international aid agencies scrambling to reach flood-affected communities, short-term relief has been in steady supply. But what becomes of communities once the houses are sturdied and the roads restored?

Pakistani farmer and shepherd, Kamal, knows all too well the value of emergency aid, but as he looks to his family's future he knows these floods leave a legacy of destruction.

Kamal was born and raised in a small village in the district of Jacobabad. It was here that he married his wife, Feroza; raised six children; and last September, spent weeks without a home.

Speaking to Caritas staff in his village, Kamal recalls how he and his family were forced to sleep under the open sky until floodwaters receded; how he lost all 20 goats and eight cows the family relied upon; how overnight, his crops were completely destroyed; and how amidst this chaos his youngest daughter was born.

"We didn't have any food. We had to survive through food donations provided by different organisations."

For millions of families like Kamal's, donations can mean the difference between life and death in the aftermath of emergency. But when the food trucks leave town, communities require the skills, tools and markets to reinvigorate a local economy.

With your generous support for Caritas Australia's South Asia Floods Appeal, Kamal and his family received a voucher for wheat and vegetable seeds, as well as a cash grant to rent a farm tractor and tube well to work and water his land.

Now, months later, Kamal and his family are stewards of a thriving wheat and vegetable garden. These new crops not only yield enough food to nourish the family of eight, but will ensure the income needed to pay off loans accumulated from the harvest lost to the floods; to buy new livestock and farming equipment; and to cover the health expenses this young family will inevitably incur.

From his experience this past year, Kamal knows that good humanitarian assistance stretches beyond the realms of short-term aid.

"If we had not received your help, we would have had to borrow more loans from our landlord and vendors, and add to an already unmanageable debt with 25 percent interest rates."

Kamal says he thanks God and the Caritas network for their assistance before, during and after the headlines. Today he has the opportunity to take care of what is most important, his family.

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Did you know that just \$50 could supply jerry cans for 10 families affected by natural disaster.

With you generous support today, we can protect the most vulnerable communities no matter what they may face tomorrow.

# Supporter Survey

Thank you for taking 10 minutes to complete our supporter survey. Your feedback will help us better understand what motivates you to support Caritas Australia, and what inspires you about our work. By completing this survey we can improve the way we share stories with you, and do more to inspire other Australians who share your commitment to social justice.

If you'd prefer to complete the survey online, visit [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) and follow the links. Otherwise you can return your completed hardcopy survey to GPO Box 9830 SYDNEY NSW 2001. To help us process your response and provide feedback please return your survey by 30 September 2011.

You can choose to remain anonymous, but we would encourage you to leave your contact details if you feel comfortable doing so.

Once again, thank you. We look forward to hearing what you think.

**Which of the following statements is most accurate about your experience with this & most other issues of CaritasNews?**

- I read all of it
- I read most of it
- I read some of it
- I did not read any of it

**How many people read your copy of CaritasNews?**

- Only myself
- Other members of my household
- I pass it on to colleagues, friends &/or family

**Do you keep CaritasNews as a resource?**

- Yes  No

**Do you enjoy reading the stories in CaritasNews?**

- Yes  No

**Do you think the stories represent the diverse communities you support through Caritas?**

- Yes  No

**Do you think the stories offer a unique perspective on aid, development & social justice news?**

- Yes  No

**What types information do you think CaritasNews should contain each quarter?**

*(Mark in order 1 – most important; 8 – least important)*

- Updates on the effectiveness of Caritas' long term development work
- Updates on the effectiveness of Caritas' disaster response programs
- Updates on Caritas' education & community advocacy work in Australia
- Stories & profiles from our partners & colleagues in the field
- Stories & profiles from our supporters in Australia
- Analysis of issues facing the communities you support
- Information about the ways you can donate
- Information about non-financial ways to support Caritas Australia (events, lobbies, campaigns)

**Please rate the following topics in terms of how much they interest you:**

Our programs in the Pacific

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our programs in South Asia, Burma & East Timor

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our programs in South East Asia

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our programs in Africa

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our programs in Latin America

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our programs in Australian Indigenous communities

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our education activities in Australian schools

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Parish & school fundraising activities

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Our campaigns & advocacy initiatives in Australia

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

HIV & AIDS, Malaria & other diseases

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Water & sanitation

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Ecological sustainability

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Women & development

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Children & development

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Education & development

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Conflict & peace building

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Justice & democracy

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Economic development initiatives

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Disability

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Theology & Caritas Australia's mission

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

Prayer resources & reflection

VERY MUCH  SOMEWHAT  NEUTRAL  LITTLE  NOT AT ALL

**Would you like to read about other topics?**

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**Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.**

CaritasNews helps me to feel a personal connection with the communities I support around the world.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

CaritasNews helps me to feel connected with a community of Caritas supporters in Australia.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

The stories in CaritasNews motivate me to learn more about social justice & development.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

The stories in CaritasNews motivate me to increase my support for Caritas Australia.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

CaritasNews shows me how my donation is making a real difference in the world.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

CaritasNews helps me to understand the non-financial ways I can support the Caritas mission.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

**Are most of the stories in CaritasNews:**

*(please choose one)*

- Too simplistic & rhetorical
- Easy to read & understand
- Too complex & difficult to understand

*(please choose one)*

- Too reliant on graphics & images
- Appropriately balances text with useful graphics & images
- Is text heavy with inadequate graphics & images

*(please choose one)*

- Too short & shallow
- Appropriate in length & depth
- Too long & overly analytical



**Do you like the design of CaritasNews?**

Yes  No

If no, what would you change?

*(eg paper type, overall length, design, layout, colours etc)*

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**How would you prefer to receive CaritasNews?**

- In hardcopy, 4 times a year
- Online with an email reminder
- Online with a postal reminder

**Is the environmental efficacy of our newsletter's paper & production methods important to you?**

Yes  No

**Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your views (*chose one*):**

- I support Caritas Australia because charity is important to my faith/morality
- I support Caritas Australia because I want to help the poorest communities help themselves
- I support Caritas Australia because I have a role to play in securing justice & long-term development in our global community.

**Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.**

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching should underpin all of Caritas Australia's work.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia should work with the poorest of the poor regardless of race, religion, ethnicity.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia's work should help people to help themselves.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia should provide fast, effective & robust relief in times of emergency.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia should work in schools to educate & inspire the next generation of Caritas supporters.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia should engage with Australian politics & public debate to advocate & lobby on behalf of the vulnerable communities we serve.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

Caritas Australia should collaborate with other Australian development agencies to influence policy issues & broad social change.

STRONGLY AGREE  AGREE  NEUTRAL  DISAGREE  STRONGLY DISAGREE

**Do you believe that the majority of your financial contributions to Caritas Australia will reach the poorest of the poor?**

Yes  No

**Do you believe your financial contributions to Caritas Australia are making a real difference in the poorest communities?**

Yes  No

**Do you believe that your action & participation in advocacy will help to uproot the structures that perpetuate injustice & global poverty?**

Yes  No

**How did you originally find out about Caritas?**

- Word of mouth
- Internet
- Social Media
- Church
- School/University
- Advertisement
- Don't Recall/Other

**How frequently do you make financial contributions to Caritas Australia?**

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Bi-annually
- Annually
- During Emergencies
- Sporadically

**How do you donate to Caritas Australia?**

- Online
- By phone
- By mail
- In person
- Through Parish/School collection

**What is the average amount of your individual donations?**

- <\$49
- \$50-\$99
- \$100-\$249
- \$250-\$499
- \$500+

**What motivates you to donate to Caritas Australia?**

- Caritas reflects my personal values/morality
- Caritas does the kind of work I am interested in
- Caritas is trustworthy & gives me plenty of information about their work
- Caritas makes a real difference
- Caritas is working for social justice
- It is easy to make donations to Caritas
- Caritas has a low administration ratio
- Other

**Have you taken part in any of Caritas Australia's advocacy campaigns or lobby initiatives?**

- A Just Climate
- Be More Weekend
- Prayer for Peace in Sudan
- Act for Democratic Republic of Congo
- Have a HAART
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever attended an event held by Caritas Australia?**

- Fish Friday
- Blueprint for a Better World
- Precious Mettle
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you visit the Project Compassion website?**

- Yes  No

If yes, what section of the website is of most relevance to you?

- Stories and resources for Schools
- Stories and resources for Parishes
- Stories and resources for General Community

**How frequently do you visit the Caritas Australia site?**

- Never  once a year  twice per year
- monthly  weekly  daily

**Why do you use the Caritas Australia website?**

*(Rank from 1 – most important to 7 – least important)*

- To find out who Caritas Australia is
- To learn about the countries that Caritas Australia works in
- To explore issues related to aid and development
- To learn about an emergency and the Caritas response
- To find out how I can take action (non-financial)
- To donate
- To visit the Project Compassion website

**Are you an active member of Caritas Australia's online community via social networking sites?**

- Twitter  Facebook  YouTube

**Gender:**

- M  F

**Age**

- 18-34  35-44  45-54
- 55-64  65-74  75+

**Marital status:**

- Single  Married

**State/Territory:**

- QLD  NSW  VIC  TAS
- SA  WA  NT

**Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?**

- Some secondary school
- Completed secondary school
- TAFE or other trade qualification
- University (undergraduate degree)
- University (postgraduate degree)
- Prefer not to answer

**Which of the following best describes your employment status?**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Casual employment
- Not working
- Retired
- Prefer not to answer

**How long have you been a Caritas Australia supporter?**

- < 1 year  1-3 years
- 3-5 years  5-10 years
- 10+ years

**Would you like to hear from us about the results of this survey?**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like us to contact you about any of the following:**

- Hopegiver/Workplace Giving
- Growing Spirit (Bequests)
- Advocacy & Community campaigns
- Education & Prayer resources



# *In concert with Creation*

WHEN FATHER MICHAEL McKenzie addresses an audience there's no denying him. Perhaps he owes his command of the room to his tall stature and resounding voice, but when he speaks of the challenges in his country – Kiribati – he mesmerises with simple, stark and sobering truths.

Like so many of the small island nations that scatter the Pacific, Kiribati's 33 coral atolls experience more than their share of life-threatening environmental degradation. Perched a mere three to four metres above an ever-rising sea level, Kiribati's subsistence-farming communities are some of the most isolated and vulnerable in the world.

For the 95,000 people who call Kiribati home, our world's changing climate is not about money, blame or politics – it is quite simply a matter of human life and dignity.

As Father Michael explains: "When we look at the climate change issue, for us it's a life issue – people are trying to cope with it day by day.

"We are living on low-lying atoll islands and our islands are very narrow. In some places you can stand in the middle and on one side you see the ocean, on the other side – the lagoon."

"When the coastline from the lagoon started eroding, people started moving in – but the more you move in the more you end up in the ocean. Those people on the ocean side, when they move in, they'll end up in the lagoon."

For Father Michael there's no doubt that coastal erosion and the rising sea

level represent a real and immediate threat to communities in Kiribati. However, communities are not only contending with inundation; ironically they experience droughts that deplete the soil and reduce the size and quality of their crops, particularly coconut crop – Kiribati's main export.

Faced with drought and rapid coastal erosion, fresh water is at a premium in Kiribati. "Most people rely on well-water," Father Michael explains, "so the intrusion of salty sea-water into our land causes a big problem for our fresh water – it affects our people and our plants as well."

It's not only salination that poses a risk to fresh water supplies; when ocean water floods into wells it carries with it the waste and contamination of its journey. For many families this means the runoff from their pigsties will end up in their drinking water.

Of all the challenges facing communities in Kiribati, most startling is the prospect that the islands will eventually be submerged.

"We have the idea of leaving the country – the idea has been introduced to the Kiribati community, but who's going to take us, and are our people willing to leave?" Father Michael questions.

"People have the idea that we were born here, we grew up here, so we're going to die here. Even though they see the signs of changes they can't believe the extreme that one day we're going to leave the island."

So what do the people of Kiribati expect of their future?

"Our people have strong faith, they believe that God will look after them – take care of them," says Father Michael. But, as he goes on to explain, that just isn't enough.

For Father Michael, a faithful commitment to justice requires that communities act as devoted stewards of Creation. And together with Caritas Australia, Father Michael is working to ensure that Kiribati's most vulnerable communities have the skills, knowledge and opportunity to preserve their island's valuable resources.

"We are training people to care for the water and our shorelines; perhaps it will be the first information they hear about the effects of climate change. But people are really experiencing the sea level rise and experiencing the drought. Some of the islands have already been submerged so I think now people are ready to hear and to understand."

One day, Father Michael, his family, and friends may relocate from their homes in Kiribati; each day until then your solidarity and your compassion will enable their communities to live with dignity in respectful harmony with their earth.

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With your support, Caritas Australia reaches even the most isolated communities in the Pacific and around the world. Your contribution of \$150 could provide Climate Change Adaptation training for 10 people living in vulnerable small island communities.



# a just climate for

Change your footprint - take a stand.



PHOTOS: RICHARD WANFRIGHT

In August this year, thousands of Australians took a stand for *A Just Climate*. Why? Because the impacts of an increasingly volatile climate routinely cast the poorest of the poor to the margins of opportunity.

“OUR FAMILY HAS lived here for over 100 years and it used to be all green rice fields,” says Bikash Mondal as he gazes out over the grey, muddy terrain that surrounds his crab fattening farm.

“The land is unrecognisable to when I was growing up.”

The only splash of colour left in this rural Bangladeshi village is the brightly decorated saris worn by village women as they navigate the slippery banks of their damaged fields.

When Bikash was growing up, his parents had a small farm they

depended on for rice and vegetables but over time, their traditional lifestyle became unreliable. Bikash explains:

“I noticed slowly the rice production decreasing and the salinity of the area increasing. We also had cattle when we were young but had to sell them as the grazing land just disappeared.”

Over the years, rising sea levels have dramatically increased the concentration of salt in once fertile soils; today, farmers like Bikash struggle to produce enough crops to eat and to sell for profit.

Like many of his fellow villagers, Bikash knew that the yield from his paddy fields could not support his young family so he found work in the local crab market. It was here that Bikash first heard how Caritas Australia was helping communities to adapt to the livelihood challenges of environmental degradation.

“Someone from Caritas came and inspected my fields,” Bikash explains.

“They told me they would be suitable for a crab fattening business. My family has always been involved with fishing so I thought I’d give it a go.”

After taking out a loan to purchase equipment, Bikash learnt new skills to care for, fatten and market his crabs. With the support of Caritas Australia, Bikash now has a profitable business buying undersized crabs at a low price,

# a just world

feeding them, and – when they are big enough – selling them for more than three times the original cost.

Happy and confident in his new line of work, Bikash decided to test his entrepreneurial skills in the Harinagar crab market.

“My house is just behind the market so I decided to set up my own depot and trade crabs,” he says.

Every day, Bikash buys crabs from local fishermen and sells them onto dealers for a 20 Taka (AUD 0.30) profit. It may not sound like much, but in a country where many people survive on less than AUD 1.00 a day, 30 cents makes a big difference.

After two years in the program, things are going very well for Bikash, his family and their eight crab ponds. Sitting on the steps of his house, surrounded by his family, he glances towards Devi, his wife, and says cheekily, “My wife has the dangerous

job; she has to tie up their claws before sending them to export!”

Bikash is proud of what he has achieved and very grateful to Caritas for the opportunity and training he received.

“I didn’t go to school and can only sign my name, but my job is actually quite sophisticated and technical,” says Bikash.

“It is more secure and far less dangerous than working as my parents did; they endured a hard living. When I was growing up, we only ate once a day,” he recalls. “Now I have money in the bank and I can provide my family with three meals a day.

“My future plan is to make the farm bigger and engage more with the poor people to help work here. I also want to educate my children.”

Today, Bikash is a proud ambassador for Caritas Australia and our efforts to build resilience in those communities

vulnerable to the threats of a changing climate.

“I’m telling other people that crab farming is a good business; I think crab cultivation would be the best way to go in this area if the salinity is going to increase.”

For Caritas Australia, Bikash’s story exemplifies the holistic approach to development that we champion, and you so generously support. It is through community skills training and livelihood initiatives that we prioritise the dignity of each farmer and their families; that we stand in solidarity with those burdened by an increasingly volatile climate; and that we nurture a community’s respectful relationship with Creation.

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To learn how Caritas Australia is helping communities facing environmental degradation and to take a stand for climate justice visit: [www.caritas.org.au/ajustclimate](http://www.caritas.org.au/ajustclimate)



“The land is unrecognisable to when I was growing up.”

# Community of caritas



## Precious Mettle

PETER DOYLE'S AT the Quay: exquisite seafood; fine dining on the Sydney Harbour's edge; a first class view of the Opera House; and worlds away from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in the heart of Africa.

It may be worlds away from the DRC, but on 9 June 2011, it was the DRC – not the fair prospect – that took centre-stage as Caritas Australia and Peter Doyle's famed restaurant presented Precious Mettle: a fundraising dinner for Caritas supporters in Sydney.

Hidden far from view, in Eastern DRC, communities are embroiled in a violent struggle for land and for control of the nation's vast mineral wealth.

Coltan (columbite-tantalite) is the mineral used to miniaturise our mobile phones, laptops, and other electronics. Coltan is the mineral at the heart of conflict in the DRC.

The DRC is believed to hold the world's largest deposit of coltan. Experts believe that most coltan mining operations are conducted illegally with the enormous profits used to fuel a brutal conflict. Armed combatants fight openly for control of the coltan industry and subsequently, violence, abuse, and debilitating poverty are a daily reality for many communities – particularly for women.

Speaking to ABC television and radio presenter Geraldine Doogue, who MC'd the Precious Mettle event, former DRC resident and Caritas Australia's Africa Program Coordinator, Lulu Mitshabu, explained what life is like in the heart of Africa.

"The situation is chaotic. It is a humanitarian disaster that is unfolding before our eyes.

"At first it is easy to be taken aback by the sheer hopelessness of the country's

By now, you've probably heard us talk about a 'community of *caritas*', but have we ever really said what that means?

As a supporter of Caritas Australia, you know that our name is synonymous with compassion and love. In your relationship with us, you share a compassionate relationship with our network of supporters, local organisations, and the communities we serve. Never more is this apparent than when you come together in the name of solidarity, justice, and of course, a good time.

current predicament, but there is certainly hope.

"Our Catholic faith calls on us to uphold the life and human dignity of the person by alleviating human suffering and promoting justice and solidarity worldwide. This is what we are called to do in the Congo."

Lulu said unnecessary death and abuse has become commonplace in DRC.

"Perhaps worse than the loss of life is the staggering numbers of human rights violations – torture, mutilation and sexual violence – that has occurred against tens of thousands of women and children," she said.

"This humanitarian crisis demands immediate action and with help from ordinary Australians, Caritas is providing assistance to the most vulnerable people in the society: women, and of course children."

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With your help we can restore justice for the victims of conflict in the Congo. For just \$1 a day you could provide a loan for 10 survivors of violence to create a community farm in Democratic Republic of Congo.

To learn more visit [www.caritas.org.au/donate](http://www.caritas.org.au/donate)

## Trying new things at Caritas Cafe

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Wodonga parishioners revelled in the spirit of *caritas* for the first ever 'Caritas Cafe'.

The inaugural fundraiser – held at Sacred Heart Church, Wodonga – saw parishioners prepare a selection of simple dishes from the six countries profiled throughout the 2011 Project Compassion campaign.

Rallied by Sacred Heart's dedicated Social Justice Team, 60 parishioners stopped in to enjoy the international flavours and to contribute more than \$200 to Caritas Australia's annual fundraising appeal.

But the morning-tea was more than just a fundraiser. Parishioners took the opportunity to learn more about culture and life in the communities they support through Caritas Australia. And as the morning drew to a close, this community of *caritas* was well and truly on a journey towards justice with the poorest of the poor.

Caritas Australia would like to thank Julie Cotter and Judy Ryan for coordinating this fantastic Caritas Cafe.

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Want to host an event of your own? Visit [www.caritas.org.au/fundraising](http://www.caritas.org.au/fundraising) and find out how your community can support Caritas Australia this year.



# Sorry Day: on a journey of reconciliation

ONE YEAR AFTER the Australian Human Rights Commission tabled its confronting *Bringing Them Home Report* on 26 May 1997, Australians publicly commemorated Sorry Day for the first time.

Through the heart-rending stories of Australia's Stolen Generation, the Commission's report was the first of its kind to reveal the full extent of forced removal policies throughout Australian history. It outlined the devastating spiritual, emotional and physical trauma endured by Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders as a direct result of forced family separations, and broken connections to traditional land, culture, and values. The report also documented the trans-generational impact that these forced child removals continue to have on the Indigenous families and communities today.

To commemorate National Sorry Day, Caritas Australia and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) joined the Bringing Them Home Committee of Western Australia

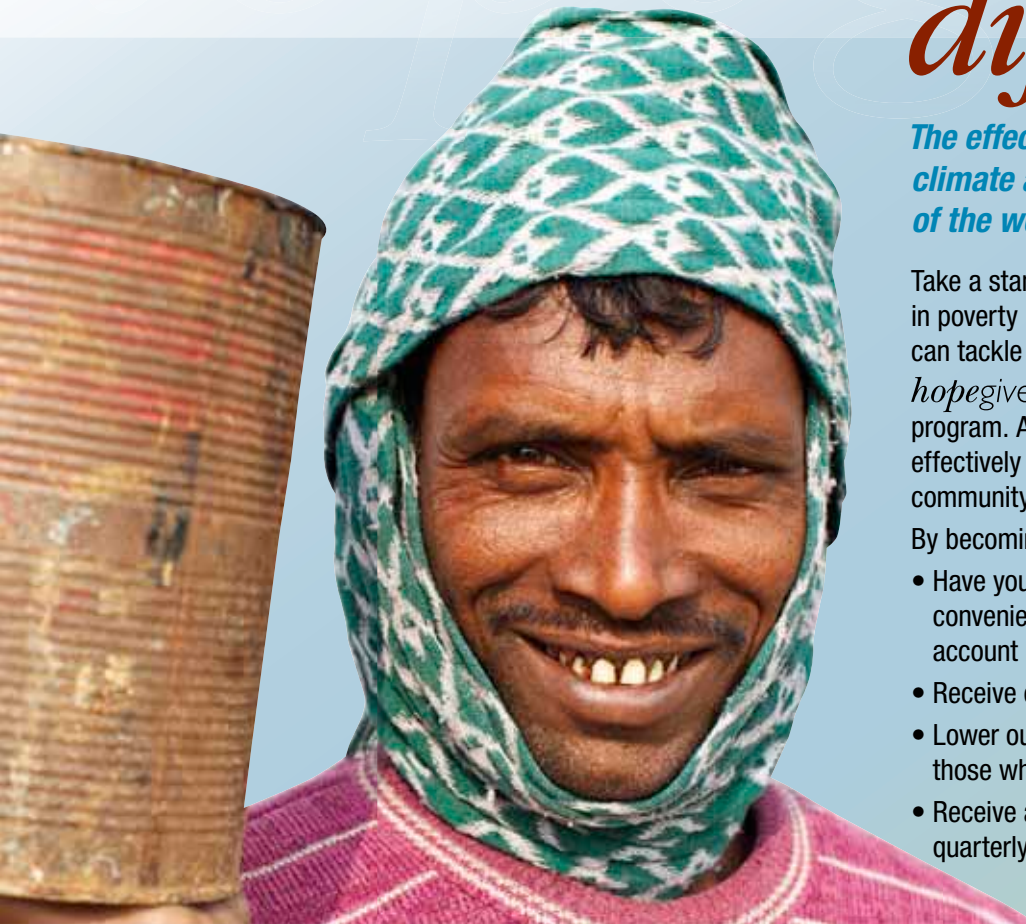
to share in a Reconciliation event at Wellington Square, East Perth.

Over the past two years CEOWA and Caritas Australia have enabled Catholic West Australian school students to participate in the Sorry Day event, acknowledging the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children throughout our history and the damage this continues to have on Indigenous families and communities.

Through powerful storytelling and music, students gained a deeper appreciation for the realities of the Stolen Generation and committed to working together to ensure genuine reconciliation in this country. Students learnt that reconciliation is not an event, nor a walk, nor a one-off occasion, but rather is about ongoing relationships, listening, and sharing.

Caritas Australia is proud to work in partnership with Australia's Indigenous communities to promote Reconciliation, and we thank you for continuing to support our life-changing programs throughout Indigenous Australia.

# hopegiver *Make a lasting difference*



*The effects of a more extreme and volatile climate are already a daily reality for many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable.*

Take a stand in solidarity and assist communities living in poverty by becoming a hopegiver, and together we can tackle the urgent challenge of climate change.

hopegiver is Caritas Australia's regular giving program. As a regular giver you are assisting to effectively ensure the continuation of life changing community projects worldwide.

By becoming a monthly giver you will:

- Have your monthly tax deductible donation conveniently deducted from your credit card or bank account
- Receive only one tax receipt at the end of the year
- Lower our administration costs and give more to those who need it most
- Receive a magnetic photo frame and beautiful quarterly postcards

Please become a *hopegiver* today and start changing lives. Simply fill-in the coupon below or visit [www.caritas.org.au/hopegiver](http://www.caritas.org.au/hopegiver) and apply online.

Yes, I will become a *hopegiver* and donate monthly...

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Please post or fax the completed form to Caritas Australia  
 Please fax back to 1800 887 895 or post to Caritas Australia,  
 GPO Box 9830, Sydney NSW 2001.

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I would not like to receive information about the work of Caritas Australia

**Privacy Statement:** The information provided by you will only be used for the purpose of giving you information about 'hopegiver' and the activities of Caritas Australia.

Become a *hopegiver* online [www.caritas.org.au/hopegiver](http://www.caritas.org.au/hopegiver)

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BSB Account No

Account name

Signature Date

Signature Date



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HGR3 - MGD