

AUSTRALIAN AID MUST PUT CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE FOREFRONT OF DEVELOPMENT

As the United Kingdom pursues a development policy which puts the climate emergency and environmental protection at the heart of overseas aid, Caritas Australia urges the Australian Government to also reflect the urgent threats as well as the regional opportunities for leadership, which climate change calls for in our own region.



Caritas Australia is the Catholic Church's aid and development agency and part of one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world.

The Catholic bishops of Oceania have joined a call by six presidents of continental bishops' conferences to take urgent action to tackle the climate change crisis. Their voices echo the insistent calls by Pope Francis to overcome global warming, which was highlighted at the recent Caritas Internationalis General Assembly in Rome.

'Every day our people are suffering from the negative — indeed sometimes disastrous —

effects of global warming,' the Oceania bishops have said.

Last year, Caritas Australia once again joined with Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, Caritas Papua New Guinea, Caritas Samoa and Caritas Tonga to publish the [annual Caritas State of the Environment Report for Oceania](#). Evidence continues to flow from communities that climate change is here and now in the Pacific — endangering homes, cemeteries and even hospitals.

Caritas Australia's Director of Advocacy, Nic Nelson, expressed his concern that the Australian Government's failure to apportion a more deliberate response to climate change in its foreign aid budget, was also an example of missed economic opportunity.

"In Indonesia for example, our support of local eco-tourism has revived communities with self-sustaining employment opportunities and preserved local rainforests from being felled for wood. Coral eco-tourism in the Pacific is also a thriving industry as are the communities who benefit from solar power and sustainable farming investment in Kenya and Zimbabwe," (pictured) Mr Nelson said.

"Australia is looked upon as a leader in its region so it's time that we took the wider view in our relationships with our regional neighbours, by offering a comprehensive aid policy that also puts climate change and environmental protection at the heart of our aid program."

Caritas Australia is offering its own vision of regional economic leadership, tackling the challenges of climate and environmental change in our region, through its *Generation Earth* campaign. Find out more at genearth.org.au

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