

Caritas Australia launches new Social and Ecological Justice Animators program

Caritas Australia, the Catholic Church's international aid and development agency, has launched a new community engagement plan to communicate the good news of our church's social and ecological justice work with parishes, schools and youth (16-25 years).

The new team of Social and Ecological Justice Animators incorporates the Catholic Earthcare team and will facilitate authentic engagement with supporters to bring Caritas Australia's work to life.

Mr Bernard Holland, the former Catholic Earthcare Director and new manager of Caritas Australia's Social and Ecological Justice Animators, said that the plan includes a deliberate focus on youth engagement, working cooperatively with Diocesan staff to support formation in the faith.

"If we do not create opportunities for intergenerational conversations we miss the opportunity to become transmitters of the faith with our youth, through meaningful catalysts such as social and ecological justice," said Mr Holland.

Sue Lomi, Caritas Australia's first ever Youth Participation Coordinator, supports young people to form deeper emotional connections with its work through the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, and paves the way forward in Caritas Australia's commitment to working with Catholic youth.

The new youth role supports young people to advocate effectively on the social and ecological justice issues most important to them, by supporting existing Youth Advocacy Groups in the Sydney Dioceses and facilitating the creation of Caritas Youth social media pages.

According to Sue Lomi, "My family showed us not through words but by example how to recognise, love and serve Christ in the poor," says Sue. "From a young age my migrant parents and grandparents from the Pacific Islands instilled in us a love for the most marginalised."

Building on existing relationships with regional Bishops, Parish Priests and Catholic Education offices, the Animators team is able to connect young Australians to Caritas Australia's mission to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity.

"As we approach the new Project Compassion launch in 2021, Caritas Australia is currently trialling its new online conversations with international development program staff, and will offer opportunities for schools and Parishes to interview program staff in the new year," Bernard Holland.

Caritas Australia is a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the world's largest humanitarian networks in the world with 169 agencies operating in over 200 countries and territories.

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