## MEDIA RELEASE: Catholic Health Australia and its members raise over $350,000 to support PNG during COVID-19 crisis

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Caritas Australia welcomes the incredible $356,200 that Catholic Health Australia members have raised to fight COVID-19 in Papua New Guinea.

The money will provide essential support to Catholic Church Health Services (CCHS), Caritas Australia's partner in PNG. With support from Caritas Australia, CCHS will prioritise the distribution of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect health workers serving their communities in PNG.

Caritas Australia will continue to work with CCHS and other local partners to support community awareness on prevention and vaccination messaging to combat the high level of vaccine hesitancy in the country, as well as provide support for the vaccine roll-out when it takes place.

"This increase in support from Catholic Health Australia members is going to make a real difference," says Emma Dawson, Pacific Program Manager. "The money will ensure that we can distribute vital PPE in partnership with CCHS, and we will work through existing networks to ensure that remote and marginalised communities get the support they need during this crisis."

"Church partners are responsible for approximately half of the schools and health facilities in the country, which means that organisations like CCHS are well-placed to make sure that vital lifesaving PPE and health messages reach people in need."

Catholic Health Australia and its members originally aimed to support the nearby Pacific nation with $250,000, to match last year's funding from Caritas Australia to distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) in remote areas of PNG.

This target has now been exceeded, thanks to the impressive number of Catholic organisations that stepped up to support PNG, including Australian Ursulines, Calvary Health, Catholic Healthcare Limited, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy Australia and PNG, Mater, Mercy Health, Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Sisters of Mercy, St John of God Health Care, St Vincent's Health Australia, Villa Maria Catholic Homes and Catholic Health Australia.

Caritas Australia is accepting donations to help support vulnerable communities in the Pacific through the Pacific Regional Appeal. Visit caritas.org.au or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to the appeal.

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