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A NEW ERA FOR AUSTRALIAN AID

Caritas Australia, the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church, welcomes the announcement of the Labor Party to commit to increasing the value of Australia's overseas aid program every year it is in government, if successful at the next year's election.

Caritas Australia Chief Executive Officer, Paul O'Callaghan, said that the commitment to increase aid made sense for a country that wants to show leadership on the world stage.

"Aid saves lives, helps lift people out of poverty and makes the world a safer place for all. Giving aid is a quintessentially Australian thing to do. Yet, years of cuts to the program have already seen spending fall dramatically.

"While most Australians think that we give large amounts of foreign aid, it only accounts for less than 1% of the Australian budget. We hope that along with an increase to aid, political parties will also look to lift the profile of the aid program and the good work that Australian aid does in the world," Mr O'Callaghan said.

For Mr O'Callaghan the Labor Party's announcement also has the potential to usher in a new era of bipartisanship on foreign aid.

"We know that the world today is a complex place. Australia should be playing a leading role in our region to help shape the world as we want it to be and aid plays a significant role in that. Caritas believes that this ALP announcement could be a pathway to renewed bipartisanship on aid as Australia looks to tackle regional and global challenges of poverty, migration and climate change," Mr O'Callaghan said.

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