



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Bishops extend national prayer campaign for drought

**Media Release**

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The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has extended the national prayer campaign for drought as historic drought conditions continue to affect most parts of eastern Australia.

The Bishops Conference initiated the prayer campaign to be held during the month of November, but this week decided that it should run indefinitely, until drought conditions ease.

“Many parishes and dioceses had local initiatives before the national campaign began and many have continued to focus on the drought in the weeks since the end of November,” Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said.

“As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, we can’t forget the many suffering through these catastrophic drought conditions, which are very much part of the bushfire crisis we are seeing in large parts of the country.”

In announcing the prayer campaign in October, the bishops said the campaign was a time to pray for those affected by crippling drought conditions, to pray for the gift of rain and to invite people to provide assistance to those most in need.

Wilcannia-Forbes Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE oversees a diocese that covers about half of New South Wales, including some of the most drought-affected areas in the country.

He said the campaign is an additional response to the local work being done in affected communities.

“Some of our Catholic ministries, along with other faith-based, charitable and government organisations, are doing remarkable work, supporting people with material needs, offering financial support and responding to people’s psychological and spiritual needs,” Bishop Macbeth-Green said in October.

“In some dioceses, practical responses like school fee relief or support with rising utility bills can ease an increasing burden for families.

“But in a Catholic context, prayer must be a part of our response.”

Bishop Macbeth-Green said while some parts of the country are more affected than others, a national campaign was necessary.

“That people living where there is plentiful, or at least enough, water don’t seem aware of how much suffering the drought is causing only adds to the hardship of those in drought-affected communities,” he said.

“The Church across Australia – lay people, religious, priests and bishops alike – needs to stand in solidarity with those suffering most acutely, offering prayers and practical support to those in most need.”

Prayer resources have been developed for parishes, schools, communities and families to participate in the National Prayer Campaign. They can be accessed at [www.catholic.org.au/drought](http://www.catholic.org.au/drought)

There are also links to appeals and other material related to drought assistance.