



*For immediate release*  
*Thursday, 3 December 2020*

## **KICKING GOALS IN A CRAZY YEAR**

**Thousands of school students across the country showed solidarity with their brothers and sisters overseas, offering their prayers, kicking goals and raising a grand total of \$102,686 for children in need.**

Socktober, Catholic Mission's annual schools and community engagement program saw students from more than 380 schools across Australia "sock it to poverty", on behalf of the people of Cambodia.

Launched in July, amid fears of lockdowns and COVID-induced chaos, the program kicked plenty of goals in challenging year.

Matt Poynting, National Community Engagement Officer at Catholic Mission, said the circumstances every school faced in this year made it a special Socktober.

"It has been the strangest and most challenging year we can remember," he said.

"But Catholic school students across the country rose to the occasion and put the needs of children in Cambodia and around the world ahead of their own."

Students were asked to create an individual supporter page to record their progress through the six-week Socktober Challenge and to gather sponsorships from friends and family for their efforts. In all, the program raised just over \$100,000 in 2020, reflecting the generosity of Australian Catholic schools.

"The most impressive thing we've seen this year is not the dollar amount, although that is outstanding," says Matt.

"It is the commitment of students to engage with their brothers and sisters overseas and do something practical to support them. That is most inspiring.

"Soccer is a game shared and loved by people of every age, gender and background right around the world, which makes it the perfect vehicle for discovering the joy of mission and the reality of children in developing countries around the world. It's what Socktober is all about," says Matt.

And with the prospect of a return to normalcy in the classrooms from Term 1 next year, Matt says Socktober is set to be bigger and better next year, which is good news for the thousands of children supported by the program.

"We hope to have many more schools and students engaged next year, as we shift our focus to supporting children in Thailand," he said.

"With so much great feedback coming from teachers around Australia who have engaged this year, I expect we will see many more school communities rise to the challenge in 2021."

To learn more about Socktober, head to [socktober.org.au](https://socktober.org.au).

**ENDS**

**For further information:**

John Hyde  
*Senior Communications Officer*

**Tel:** 0419 997 857

**Email:**  
[media@catholicmission.org.au](mailto:media@catholicmission.org.au)

**Website:**  
[www.catholicmission.org.au](http://www.catholicmission.org.au)

**About Catholic Mission**

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church’s global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ’s mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Founded in Sydney in 1847, Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and take action for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.