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MEDIA RELEASE

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MARY WARD INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES 2020 CHRISTMAS APPEAL

With India at the epicentre of COVID-19, Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) calls on the support of all Australians who are in a position to give. MWIA's 2020 Christmas Appeal seeks to help those in India suffering as a result of COVID-19 and Cyclone Amphan.

'India has become an epicentre of COVID-19, accounting for nearly one-fifth of all cases worldwide. It is one of the pandemic's worst-hit countries. This, plus the devastation experienced as a result of Cyclone Amphan in May, means families in India need our help to recover and rebuild more than ever before', MWIA Executive Officer Hannah George said.

'Our Loreto Sisters are working to repair and rebuild houses and provide food, clothing, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, and medical supplies to cyclone-hit communities in West Bengal already reeling from COVID-19. Now that families are returning to labour in the region's notorious brickfields, the Sisters will also need to continue to provide free education and health care to children and adult workers needing treatment.

'With your support this Christmas, they also hope to meet other basic needs. They hope to bring light to the homes of the families they serve. By providing solar lanterns, families will have light to study, cook, sew, and fish after the sun sets. They plan to produce and provide sanitary napkins to the girls and women of their communities, where menstruation remains a social taboo.

'It is important to all of us at MWIA to continue the joy of giving and receiving at Christmas so that those most affected by the challenges of 2020 can work towards a brighter future.'

You can join MWIA in helping families impacted by the pandemic and cyclone rebuild their lives by donating to the 2020 MWIA Christmas appeal via <https://www.mwia.org.au/donate/current-appeal-1> or by calling **(03) 9813 4023**

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