

Caritas Australia welcomes a \$31m government investment into Ukraine aid.

The Australian Government has announced that it will provide a further \$31m of assistance to help meet Ukraine's energy and humanitarian needs. Funding will be split between the provision of heat and electricity to Ukrainians, supporting the UN as it coordinates supplying essentials such as food, shelter and water, and a UN partnership focused on supporting persons with disabilities.

Damian Spruce, Advocacy Associate Director at Caritas Australia, said "we are pleased to see the Australian Government affording further support to Ukraine and its most vulnerable people, something the humanitarian sector has been advocating for since the last investment in June 2023."

Just last month Caritas Australia made a submission to the inquiry into Australian support for Ukraine that recommended: additional funding for Ukraine - both multi-year humanitarian funding and long-term funding aimed at redevelopment - an overall increase to the Humanitarian Emergencies fund, and the provision of new funding pathways for non-governmental organisations that support local partners.

"What we are hearing from our partners in the region is that millions of Ukrainians are facing a compounding humanitarian crisis that is already having a long-term impact on future generations. Loss of homes, livelihoods, disruption of education, and severe trauma all have lasting consequences. We still need greater funding opportunities for local partners who could make the greatest difference in the face of these challenges" Damian Spruce added.

Caritas Australia's Ukraine Crisis Appeal supports several local partners in the region, across 448 parish hubs with more than 1200 employees covering most regions of Ukraine. As of February 2024, 4.2 million people had been helped by the joint response. The most urgent needs continue to be helping displaced people access safe shelter, emergency food, water, hygiene kits, medication, and psychosocial support.

Caritas' UK agency, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), visited Ukraine in April 2024. On his return, **Director of International Programs at CAFOD Fergus Conmee** said "While visiting I saw damage to churches, homes, and other important infrastructure, heard air raid alerts going off multiple times a day, and witnessed the cumulative physical and psychological impacts people are facing. Despite all the hardships, our partners were continuing to support those who were most affected by the conflict. This is what brought me the most hope."

"Over two years into this conflict our brothers and sisters in Ukraine are still very much in need of our love and compassion. We must pray for a just peace and do what we can to support those who continue to suffer" he concluded.

To support Caritas Australia's Ukraine Crisis Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/ukraine/ or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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The Catholic agency for international aid and development

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