

## **Caritas Australia welcomes continued aid investment in Federal Budget**

Caritas Australia welcomes the Australian Government's continued investment in international aid in the 2026–27 Federal Budget, recognising Australia's vital role in responding to growing global humanitarian need.

The Budget commits \$5.2 billion in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in 2026–27, representing a modest increase of \$112 million compared to the previous year, helping maintain Australia's support at a time when many global donors are scaling back.

**Caritas Australia CEO Kirsten Sayers** said the commitment comes at a critical moment, with global humanitarian needs continuing to rise sharply while aid budgets are under pressure internationally.

"Around the world, people are facing compounding crises such as ongoing conflict, climate-driven disasters and economic shocks, all while global aid is under great strain," Kirsten Sayers said. "In turn, Australia's continued commitment to international assistance serves to save lives, strengthen communities and contribute to a more stable and peaceful region."

The Budget maintains a strong regional focus, with more than three-quarters of Australia's aid directed to the Indo-Pacific, including approximately \$2.2 billion for the Pacific and \$1.4 billion for Southeast Asia. Humanitarian assistance is estimated at \$742 million in 2026–27, supporting responses to conflict, displacement, and climate-related disasters.

This budget lands following a tumultuous year with devastating conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan having continued, wider instability having spread across the Middle East, and communities across Asia and the Pacific having been hit by increasingly severe natural disasters.

Amid these crises, Caritas Australia supported over 2.3 million people in more than 30 countries last year, working through local partners, and often in partnership with the Australian Government to deliver humanitarian assistance, protection services, climate resilience programs, health services, water programs, food security, and livelihoods support.

Caritas Australia also serves as the lead agency for the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO), coordinating the Australian church sector's humanitarian responses to major emergencies, including rapid appeals and community-led recovery efforts alongside affected partners overseas. "Our role in the region in supporting climate resilience and disaster response is essential," said Kirsten Sayers.

Over the past year, the Australian Government has delivered targeted humanitarian and development funding across the Indo-Pacific and beyond, including emergency assistance in Gaza, Sudan, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Vietnam, as well as investments in health, vaccines, gender equality, disability inclusion, disaster preparedness and clean energy transitions in the Pacific.

Kirsten Sayers said Australia's aid program reflects the nation at its best, compassionate, outward-looking and committed to standing with communities in times of crisis.

"International aid is not just a moral commitment; it is a smart investment that reflects Australian values of fairness, responsibility and shared prosperity," she said. "By supporting resilience, stability and human dignity beyond our borders, Australia contributes to a safer, more prosperous future for us all."

### **ENDS**

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