

Caritas Compassion Hub makes it easier than ever to make a difference

Caritas Australia has launched its Compassion Hub, a new online platform that makes it easier for individuals, schools, parishes, community groups and workplaces to raise money for people facing poverty, injustice and humanitarian emergencies around the world.

For the first time, supporters can create a personalised fundraising page through on the Caritas Australia website and receive donations directly through a secure online platform. Previously, supporters needed to collect donations themselves before making a contribution to Caritas Australia.

The Compassion Hub builds on the success of Caritas Australia's online Project Compassion fundraising platform, which has helped reduce the cash handling and administrative burden on participating schools and parishes.

There are no restrictions on the type of fundraiser supporters can create. Fundraisers can be held in memory of a loved one, as a wedding collection, based around a physical challenge, or through community events and social gatherings.

Fundraisers can be set up to support the full breadth of Caritas Australia's international aid and development work or be directed towards humanitarian emergencies through the Emergency Response Fund. Supporters can also establish fundraising pages dedicated to specific emergencies in Ukraine, Venezuela, Gaza, Sudan and Lebanon.

Already, Australians are embracing creative ways to make a difference, particularly in support of communities impacted by the devastating earthquakes in Venezuela.

Nicole Chehine, Engagement Director at Caritas Australia, said Australians had responded immediately to the crisis through the new platform.

"In the past week alone, supporters have organised beach volleyball tournaments, comedy nights and kayaking excursions to support people in need in Venezuela. We are immensely grateful for this support as the crisis in Venezuela will only deepen as time stretches on and people remain displaced."

To date, 3,342 people have been confirmed dead, an estimated 50,000 people remain missing, and more than 1.2 million tonnes of rubble will need to be cleared in a recovery and rebuild effort that is expected to last years. Caritas Venezuela reports that thousands of families are sleeping in parks, plazas and open spaces, with many people afraid to return to homes damaged by the earthquake.

In response Caritas Venezuela has mobilised approximately 30,000 volunteers, deployed emergency response teams into affected communities and begun distributing drinking water, hygiene kits and emergency food supplies. Collection centres have been activated across 35 dioceses and numerous parishes, with the global Caritas network providing funding and technical support to strengthen the response.

As communities move from emergency response to recovery and rebuilding, urgent needs include shelter, food, clean water, medical supplies, sanitation facilities and protection for vulnerable groups, including children, older people and people living with disabilities.

"With rising need around the world, driven by natural disasters, climate change and conflict, we hope the Compassion Hub makes it easier than ever for Australian communities to put their faith into action in the face of devastating crises" concluded Nicole Chehine.

Supporters can create a fundraiser or donate through the Compassion Hub at <https://fundraise.caritas.org.au>

To support Caritas Australia's Venezuela Earthquake appeal with a donation visit www.caritas.org.au/venezuela or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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