

CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#163 | AUTUMN 2021



PROJECT COMPASSION BE MORE

PROJECT COMPASSION:

Be More with the largest Lenten fundraiser in the country

56 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT:

Personal stories of global impact

FIVE GLOBAL HEROES:

From Bangladesh, the Solomon Islands, Tanzania and Indonesia

COMMUNITIES CONNECT:

For our global neighbours with compassion and creativity



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

THANK YOU

2020 reminded us about the power of hope. The daily uncertainties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the fragility and preciousness of life.

The pandemic has had lasting effects on our society. We've changed the way we gather, the way we celebrate, even the way we mourn – with new measures requiring us to adapt to distance and social isolation. It was a time of collective uncertainty and personal reflection.

For the vulnerable communities which your support reaches globally, the hardships of poor infrastructure and limited income, together with COVID-19, are an ongoing challenge, and in many cases, a threat to survival. The World Bank predicts that the pandemic will push up to 150 million people into extreme poverty this year.

This year's Project Compassion theme, 'Be More' is inspired by the words of St Oscar Romero, to 'aspire not to have more, but to be more.' This year's theme challenges us to maintain our commitment to others, to the common good, even as we face our own hardships. It's the example I strive to set for my own young son.

In 2021, we also tell the story of the unique Australian history of Project Compassion, and the way that for over 55 years, determined local communities have had their hearts and minds focused on global neighbours.

This Lent, thank you for joining me on this journey towards a better, more just world where all may thrive. Thank you for 'being more' with Caritas Australia and carrying on the remarkable legacy of Project Compassion, at a time when the need is greater than ever.



With gratitude,
Kirsty Robertson

Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer
Caritas Australia

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+ Caritas Australia stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar during these particularly challenging times. We pray for her people, especially the vulnerable and marginalised communities who will be most severely impacted by the recent political upheavals.



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Cover: Jamila in Bangladesh is overcoming great odds through your support.
Photo: Richard Wainwright / Caritas Australia.
All photos Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated.



Oliva with local women near her home. As well as her own children, Oliva looks after two other children after her brother in law passed away. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia

IN THE NEWS

'BE MORE' WITH PROJECT COMPASSION THIS YEAR



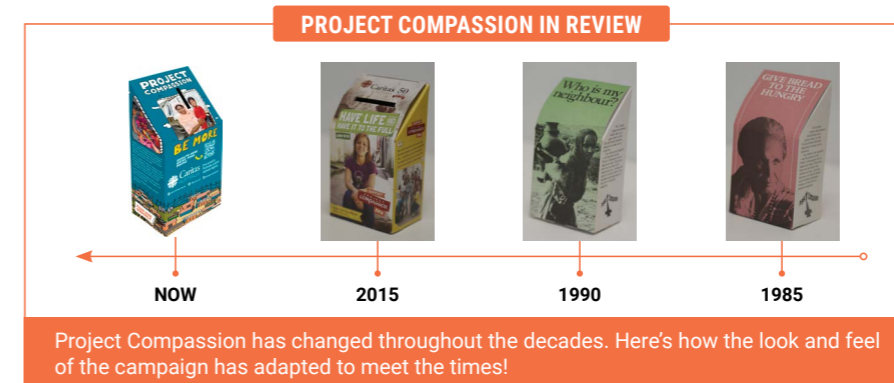
In these times of global change and upheaval, Project Compassion 2021 calls on us to 'Be More', to step up in support of our global brothers and sisters.

During COVID-19 times, it is through our existing local partnerships, working on long-term programs through our extensive church and partner network, that we have been able to respond so swiftly to the needs created by the impacts of coronavirus.

For over 55 years, your support of Caritas Australia has allowed us to reach out with arms of love to some of the most vulnerable communities in the world. Since its beginnings under the title of

'Catholic Relief Services' in 1965, the support of the Australian public has helped raise millions for marginalised people in 23 countries, across the Pacific, Asia, Africa and right here in First Australian communities.

Your generosity lifts up, supports and offers new possibilities to vulnerable people all over the world. Through livelihoods programs, education, medical and health services such as emergency hygiene kit distribution, you are helping to improve the wellbeing of poor communities and inspiring hope. Thank you for stepping up. Thank you for 'being more' with Caritas Australia.



EASTER GUIDE DEEPENS FAMILY REFLECTION

This Lent, spend more time in family prayer reflection with our Lent & Easter Guide. It's a fantastic way to connect to the deeper themes of the Lenten season, including special prayers for each of the six Sundays of Lent as well as a prayer guide for the Easter Triduum (Good Friday through to Easter Sunday), and activities for children!

May you find, in this holy season, the silence and peace of Lent and, finally, the hope and joy of Easter and Christ's glorious resurrection.

Visit www.caritas.org.au/lenten-and-easter-guide/



HAVE YOUR SAY

“ God bless you all as you strive to build a better world and home for those you love and care for.

- Steven Jones

Dear Steven,
Thank you for being the agent of change that helps empower entire communities.

- Caritas Australia

“ We have a duty to reach out to the poor, to those who hunger, to those who are sick and those who are marginalised.

- Martin Smith

Dear Martin, your words speak to the call of the Gospel, to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick and shelter the homeless. Thank you for your solidarity!

- Caritas Australia

“ Lent is important to me, it helps me be a stronger follower of Christ.

- Dorothy Jones

Dear Dorothy, since ancient times, times of fasting, prayer and abstinence have helped Christians to deepen their faith. Thank you for your support.

- Caritas Australia

“ My heart goes to all suffering women who are extremely courageous in the most awful circumstances. Praying for you all.

- Anonymous

” Thank you for your support and for joining us in the belief that when you support a woman, you empower an entire community.

- Caritas Australia

“ When it comes to helping poor communities, I don't think it matters what religion you may or may not have. We all need to give what we can to help others.

- Susan Brett

” Dear Susan, thank you for joining with us in support of Caritas Australia's mandate to help all those in need, regardless of ethnicity, religion or social status. This is the truest form of the Gospel of love.

- Caritas Australia



A young woman carries a child near the home of Oliva in Tanzania. Photo: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia



We want to hear from you!

Email questions@caritas.org.au or comment on our social media via @CaritasAU on Facebook or @caritasau on Instagram.



ARSAD, INDONESIA

IMPROVING COMMUNITY WELLBEING



In Indonesia, your support is improving toilet infrastructure which is ending the dangerous practice of open defecation. Photos: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

Arsad, an Indonesian farmer, had no toilet in his home. He and his family had to walk into the forest to the open defecation area, even overnight or in the rain.

Surrounded by bush and forest and without any built toilet infrastructure, around 17 percent of Indonesia's rural population practice open defecation, unfortunately unaware that it contributes to spreading diseases.

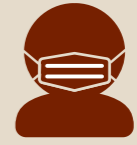
The practice left Arsad's family ill with digestive problems and colds. Through your support of Caritas Australia and its partner, Laz Harfa, he took part in hygiene, sanitation and financial management training. He decided to fund the building of a toilet in his house and help others in his neighbourhood save up for their own toilets.

Now Arsad and his family are healthier and have reduced their medical expenses. Their community no longer practices open defecation and is more harmonious. A community event called 'Declaration of Open Defecation-Free' was even held to acknowledge their achievements.

Through your help and that of Laz Harfa, we shared prevention measures and distributed soap and masks.

Arsad has inspired his neighbourhood to 'Be More'.

"We help each other, the 'togetherness' is growing. Our solidarity has increased," Arsad says.



Through proper hygiene practices, including regular handwashing, social distancing and wearing personal protective equipment, communities have been able to improve their health in Indonesia.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: Willy Tan



"My work is dedicated to easing human suffering and helping people in need to lead more fruitful and fulfilling lives."

I've worked at Caritas Australia for 12 years now.

The most satisfying part of my job has been hearing from community members what a difference Caritas Australia's support has made to them. In my last visit to Indonesia, an elderly woman told me: **"We are happy that you come and you listen to us. Thank you for the work you do."** That made me feel very happy.

I work alongside vulnerable communities, inspiring them, supporting them, and offering them guidance and opportunities for initiating social change and making improvements to their own community. I help them to plan what they want to achieve and take appropriate action and develop activities.

Over the last three years, 8500 people have improved access to toilets and benefited from the construction or repair of water supply systems, and this saves community members especially the women many hours a day in water collection.

Ensuring a community has access to safe water not only improves hygiene and sanitation, and prevents the spread of water-borne diseases, but is often the starting point for strong community empowerment.



Women like Jamila (left) and Halima (right) find new hope in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar. Photos: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

JAMILA AND HALIMA, BANGLADESH

PEACE OUT OF TRAUMA

Twenty-two-year-old Jamila is a single mother living in the world's largest refugee camp, Cox's Bazar, in Bangladesh. A Rohingya woman, she'd fled the armed conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State to save herself, her elderly mother, and her eight-month-old baby. Abandoned by her husband, she faced life in the camp on her own.

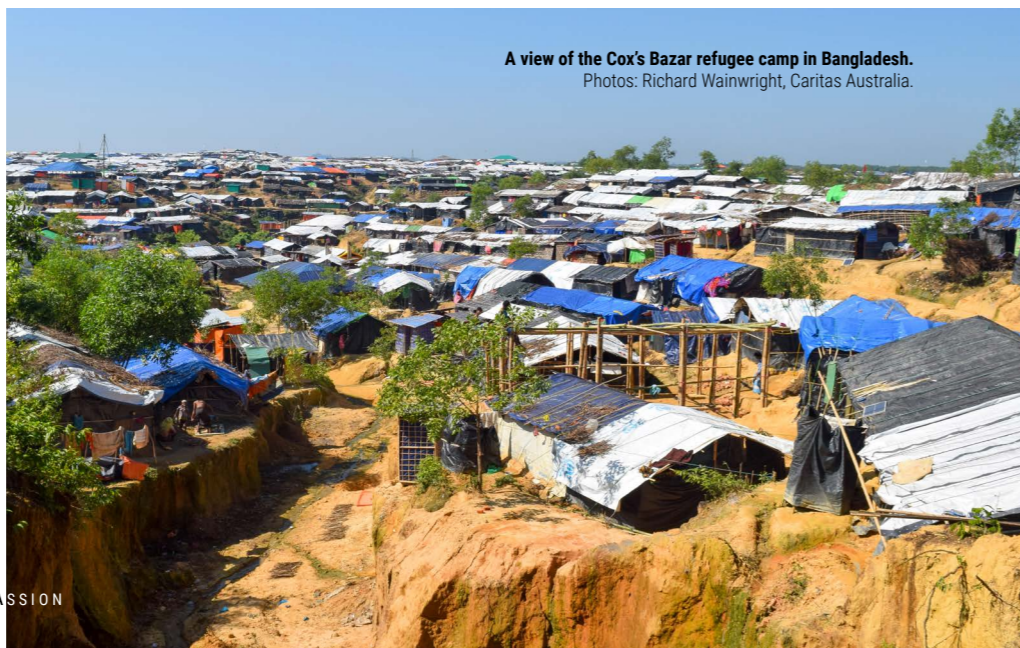
Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people have crossed the border into Bangladesh since August 2017. Over 1.3 million people live in the densely populated camp and are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of Caritas Australia's supporters and through our partnership with Caritas Bangladesh, Jamila has been able to access emergency food and shelter. As her stay in the camp stretched on, Jamila joined

the Women Friendly Spaces project, where she received counselling and emotional support. She also learnt about health and hygiene, participated in a parenting program, and gained sewing skills to help her to earn an income.

Jamila now has a sense of community around her, and feels less alone and more supported. As a result, she's able to 'Be More' for her family.

"I want to offer my thankful greetings to those who are kindly thinking of us from overseas," Jamila says. **"Thank you, and thanks Caritas Australia."**



A view of the Cox's Bazar refugee camp in Bangladesh. Photos: Richard Wainwright, Caritas Australia.

Halima is raising two children under seven in a refugee camp in Bangladesh, while caring for her mother who has a disability. Widowed at just 21, Halima fled violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017, arriving at the camp with nothing.

Thanks to supporters like you, Caritas Australia, through its partner, Caritas Bangladesh, provided Halima with a shelter and cooking equipment so she could feed her family. She participated in hygiene and sanitation training and took on the role of community trainer herself, organising the cleaning of washrooms, wells and toilets.

Halima's training became all the more invaluable as the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and safe hygiene and preventative measures became life-saving.

Halima is proud she is able to earn a small income while maintaining the health of her family and the cleanliness of the camp community. Her children are adapting to life in the camp and are now at school.

Halima aspired to 'Be More' for her family and for the community around her.

"My hope is that our children will be able to do a job, live with pleasure, and find their happiness. That will bring wellbeing for them," Halima says.



Country	Bangladesh
Region	Cox's Bazar, Chittagong
Program name	Caritas Response to Forcibly Displaced People of Myanmar and Host Communities in Bangladesh
Program fact	Almost one million Rohingya people have moved from Myanmar to Bangladesh in recent years
Aims and actions	Forcibly displaced people of Myanmar live dignified lives in Bangladesh, with paths and steps, retention walls and bridges for 16,498 families
Number of people helped	281,777 (individuals) and 61, 663 households
Funding support	\$1,727,342 *this emergency response is also supported by the Australian Government's Humanitarian Partnership program

Interested in finding out more about the stories of inspiring change behind Caritas Australia's Project Compassion campaign? Visit lent.caritas.org.au now!

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: Inmanuel Chayan Biswas Head of Operations, Caritas Bangladesh

Since Inmanuel Chayan Biswas joined Caritas in 2018, he has witnessed the trauma and heartache of the Rohingya refugee crisis.

"You could say that we are giving hope because most of the women and children came here with trauma, but gradually after three years, many of these women and children have regained a sense of hope."

"At first, they would remain in their huts and speak to nobody. Yet now,

children come to us to talk. This makes me happy. There were once only a few women and children (out and about), now we see many around the camps every day which shows us they are accepting our work and our efforts."

"The Rohingya community is being described as a forgotten humanitarian crisis. The support of Caritas Australia is so timely and so appropriate. We hope that many people will join with you to become like a hand of God to the Rohingya community."



Women like Jamila practice good personal hygiene and safety measures to protect themselves against coronavirus. Photo: Inmanuel Chayan Biswas.



Oliva, 22, lives in Tanzania with her farmer husband, two young sons, and their adopted niece and nephew.

Oliva didn't have the opportunity to go to school growing up, and she was embarrassed that she couldn't read, write or count. She runs a kiosk and works as a farm labourer but her business was losing money because she couldn't add up.

Oliva is far from alone. Around 25 percent of Tanzanian girls and women over 15 can't read or write. **"Due to low family income, my parents could not send me to school,"** Oliva says. **"As an adult, people used to take advantage of me because I couldn't count, I was operating my business at a great loss and was not in a position to save."**

Then Oliva enrolled in a Caritas Australia literacy and numeracy class where she improved her counting skills and became a more proficient reader. She even set up a classroom in her mud brick home, sharing her new skills to help other women with their learning.

With your support and Oliva's own determination, she has now graduated, as have some of her students - and attendance at her classes is growing. Her children are also able to learn in the village, instead of travelling seven kilometres to school.

"I am proud to be a teacher who helps others to achieve their dream. I would like to thank Caritas Australia for your support toward fulfilment of our community vision" Oliva says.

Please give generously at lent.caritas.org.au today!

OLIVA, TANZANIA

LEARNING FOR LIFE



Sr Ivy Khoury during a book distribution. Photo: Sr Ivy Khoury, Caritas Australia.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: Sr Ivy Khoury

Sr Ivy Khoury is Caritas Australia's Program Coordinator for Africa, here's what she had to say about the life-changing impact your support enables across much of the continent.

"I feel inspired that we are trying to follow the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Principles and the Gospel. I also feel inspired that the centre of our work is supporting the most marginalised and

vulnerable throughout the world."

"For me it is a privilege and humbling to meet the most marginalised and vulnerable that we serve. They are such an inspiration to me with the way they live with hope and faith believing that God will provide. Their courage is incredible – they never give up and keep striving to make their lives better. Watching the people take responsibility

of their own lives by participating in all the activities is such an example to me. I absolutely love being with the poor who have taught me so much in my 14 years at Caritas Australia."

Along with your generous support, this program is also supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP).



MARGRET, SOLOMON ISLANDS

EDUCATION THAT GIVES HOPE



Margret, 39, is a teacher at a vocational school for deaf students in the Solomon Islands. She was born deaf, so she knows the challenges it poses to education and employment.

The school where Margret works faced water shortages for about half the year. Due to the great distance of local water sources, staff and students would walk for up to half an hour to collect water for drinking, cooking, washing and growing vegetables. Then in April 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold struck, damaging the school's buildings and its vegetable garden as the threat of COVID-19 loomed.

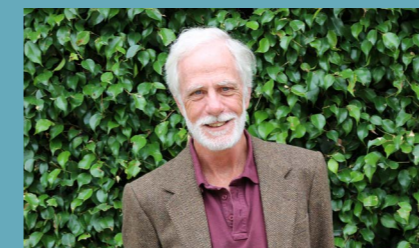
With your support, Margret's school installed eight large water tanks and provided cyclone-proof materials to repair the damage. Your generosity also helped the school implement COVID-19 prevention measures and provided fabric for students to make face masks.

Margret's school now has enough safe water to supply the school's population of 150 and the capacity to cater for more students. It plans to boost food security by increasing its agricultural production, which will improve nutrition, boost the school's income and build resilience to future disasters.

Margret hopes that the school can aspire to 'Be More'.

"I am proud that our school community works together with Caritas Australia as our partner in ensuring that we live in a healthier environment," Margret says.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD: Michael Peyra



"I've been working with Caritas in various roles in the International Programs team since mid-2005, close to 16 years.

People, hope, compassion and commitment and the idea of contributing to a fairer and better world are what drive me to do this

work. Together with the Australian public we can make the change we believe in, and from long years of experience in this work, I know we do - big time!

For communities like Margret's in the Solomon Islands, who live in remote areas that rely for health and wellbeing on a constant and sustainable water supply, our Water, Health and Sanitation (WASH) programs are critically important."

-Michael Peyra is a Senior Coordinator of Caritas Australia's Pacific Group

Caritas Australia is inviting parishioners into prayer, reflection and dialogue with our International Program Staff through lent.

You can register for a session at lent.caritas.org.au/virtualimmersions



AUSTRALIANS USE TECHNOLOGY TO 'BE MORE' FOR PROJECT COMPASSION

NATION-WIDE SUPPORT FOR PROJECT COMPASSION 2021

All across Australia, you have joined the groundswell of support to 'Be More' for Project Compassion. Here are just some of the ways that you have come together to work towards more justice and equity for vulnerable communities.

In the Diocese of Paramatta, over 30 Catholic schools came together to 'Be More' for the ongoing mission of global poverty eradication. Some students attended in person, but most joined the special webinar online.

Students heard powerful stories from refugees and underprivileged communities, emerging with the determination to promote good health and wellbeing, gender equality and environmental sustainability across the world.

"(The Project Compassion launch) helped me understand the little contributions we can make and how it can go a long way," said Adut Deng from St Clare's. "I learnt that I have a lot of power and privilege and because of that I should go out of my way to help those who don't have the same advantages as me."

Thank you, Diocesan Director for the Diocese of Paramatta, Patrice Moriarty, Catholic Education Diocese of Paramatta and Diocese of Paramatta student body for 'Being More' with Caritas Australia and Project Compassion.



In Adelaide, Project Compassion kicked off with a multicultural launch event, while on the East Coast, school launch events were hosted by Zoom. Photos: Caritas Australia.



Students and teachers came together to 'Be More' for the world's most vulnerable communities through Project Compassion and Caritas Australia. Photo: Catholic Education Diocese of Paramatta.



GIVING INJUSTICE 'THE FLIP' ON PANCAKE TUESDAY

The Christian tradition of eating pancakes just before the beginning of Lent is one which stretches back to medieval times. In today's society, we may under-appreciate the challenge of food shortages in poor communities globally. The World Bank tells us that the coronavirus pandemic will push the global poverty rate up for the first time in 20 years. The impacts of COVID-19 have been devastating on communities already struggling across the Pacific, Asia and Africa, where malnourishment and poor nutrition have contributed to childhood stunting and poor health throughout communities.

The money you raise by flipping and eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday helps vulnerable communities globally who face the daily challenges of poverty.



In Canberra and in Sydney, Caritas Australia staff give the 'flip' to poverty with its traditional Shrove Tuesday pancake fundraiser. Photos: Caritas Australia



PROJECT COMPASSION THROUGH GENERATIONS WITH THE MORIARTY FAMILY!

Margaret Moriarty, 70 (pictured here with her children, grandchildren and Bishop Vincent Long), is the matriarch of the Moriarty family. A long-time Caritas Australia supporter, she says she can't remember a time without a Project Compassion box in her house during Lent.

For four generations now, the Moriarty family have been stalwart advocates of Project Compassion and Caritas Australia, *"As my husband and I firmly believe in donating to Project Compassion, our own children have grown up with the same iconic boxes in our home. Some of my grandchildren are also continuing the tradition now at home and at school and I am proud that four generations of my family have been able to live out Christ's love in the world,"* Margaret says.



Mrs Moriarty is also pictured with her parents and her sister at the age of ten. Photos: Patrice Moriarty.



Caritas Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians, past, present and emerging, of the land on which all our offices are located. This edition may include images or words of indigenous people who may be deceased.



Caritas Australia is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Please note: some of the programs featured in this issue of Caritas News are funded by Caritas Australia and the Australian Government.



Caritas Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).



The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is the national regulator of charities.



Caritas Australia is a proud member of CAN, a group of eleven Church-based overseas aid and development agencies committed to empowering people and providing avenues for them to overcome injustice and poverty.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES HEAD TO:

- 24-32 O'Riordan St, Alexandria NSW 2015
- 1800 024 413 (toll free) 9am - 5pm AEST Mon - Fri
- questions@caritas.org.au
- www.caritas.org.au

- twitter.com/CaritasAust
- facebook.com/CaritasAU

MIX logo

Jamila is a single mother living in the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

You can help give someone like Jamila the support they need to overcome more, achieve more and be more.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TODAY.



YES, I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT TODAY!

Below are some examples of how your donation can help:

- \$45** could help supply COVID-19 prevention kits for families in a refugee camp.
- \$160** could help provide one family with materials to build their own toilet in Indonesia.
- \$600** could help construct a water point to provide clean, reliable water for a community in Tanzania.
- My choice of: \$** _____

YES, I WILL BECOME A CARITAS NEIGHBOUR AND GIVE MONTHLY:

I would like to provide ongoing monthly support as part of the 'Caritas Neighbours' program:

- \$18 PER MONTH** **\$51 PER MONTH** **\$100 PER MONTH** **OR** **My choice of: \$** _____

MY PAYMENT DETAILS

CHEQUE **MONEY ORDER**

CREDIT CARD

Visa Mastercard Amex Diners

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

BANK TRANSFER to Caritas Australia – Bank: Commonwealth – BSB 062 438 – Acct 10072432 – Ref. AU21NL

PLEASE DIRECT DEBIT MY ACCOUNT MONTHLY

I authorise Caritas Australia to debit the above amount from my account identified below on the 15th of each month. Acting on my instructions the user may, by prior arrangement and advice to me, vary the amount for future debits.

Account name: _____

BSB: _____ Account no. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Before payments commence, Caritas Australia will provide you with a full Service Agreement and confirmation of your details regarding this arrangement. Payments will be deducted on the 15th of the month or the next normal business day.

MY CONTACT DETAILS

Supporter ID: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

- I would like my receipt sent to my email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donations goes where it is needed most.
- I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.
- Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive Caritas News in the future.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Complete this form and return to **Caritas Australia**

Call us on **1800 024 413** with your credit card details

Donate online at **caritas.org.au/give**

Caritas AUSTRALIA End poverty Promote justice Uphold dignity