

A fairer world where all people live with dignity

Information about Caritas Australia's Fairer World campaign

Our Fairer World campaign asks our next Prime Minister to ensure that Australia acts in solidarity with those experiencing poverty and injustice.

- Rebuild our contribution to international aid and development to 2012 levels by the end of this term of government.
- Strengthen our climate change targets, establishing a plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and providing our fair share of funding to help communities affected by climate change.
- Uphold the human rights of First Australians by ensuring their partnership in decisions which affect them.

About Australian Aid

Australia's overseas aid has helped millions of people across the world to break down the barriers that held them in a cycle of poverty. Australian aid has provided millions of people with access to safe drinking water, education, essential health services, sustainable livelihoods, improved gender equality and economic development. Our aid has provided life-saving assistance to millions in emergencies like Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu or the Nepal earthquake.

However, the government has cut the Australian aid program by a staggering \$11.3 billion over four years. Australian aid is now at the lowest level it's ever been in its six decade history. The consequences are devastating for people in the world's most vulnerable communities.

Caritas Australia believes that Australian aid is a reflection of our sense of fairness and justice. That's why we are asking all political parties to agree to restore the Australian aid budget to 2012 levels (before the \$11.3 billion cuts) in the next term of government. In the longer-term we're asking for all parties to commit to an aid target of 0.7% GNI by 2030. (When signing the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, Australia committed to reaching 0.7% GNI by 2015. Australia is currently at 0.23% GNI while the UK reached 0.7% last year).

About climate justice

Climate change is one of the single biggest threats to reducing poverty. Many of our partner communities are already experiencing the harsh impacts of a changing climate. They have told us the seas are rising around their homes, droughts are lasting longer, farming seasons are more unpredictable, fresh water is scarcer and extreme weather events such as cyclones are becoming fiercer. They have spoken of the harsh impacts on their families, livelihoods, health and food security. (continued next page)



“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”

– Pope Francis



If we are serious about tackling poverty, we need to take climate change seriously. The world's poorest people are already being hit hardest by climate change, despite having contributed the least to global warming. In advocating for climate justice, we are encouraged by Pope Francis' strong leadership on caring for creation including through his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

Australia has a responsibility to strengthen our climate targets and to help our poorer neighbours tackle climate change. Australia is an industrialised country that has benefited from the fossil fuel-driven economic system that has contributed to climate change. Australia is currently the highest per capita carbon emitter in the OECD, and the 13th highest per capita emitter in the world. We have far greater capacity, and responsibility, to cut our greenhouse gas emissions than poorer countries.

'Net zero carbon pollution' means a balance between the amount we pollute and the amount we reabsorb e.g. through forests. Rapid emission reductions is a vital part of achieving net zero carbon pollution. Net zero carbon pollution by 2050 is what Australia needs to achieve in order to play its part in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. To get us there, Australia should commit to reducing emissions compared to 2005 levels by 45-65% by 2025 and by 65-80% by 2030.

About First Australians

Caritas Australia recognises the unacceptable gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians across many quality of life indicators, including life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, education and health.

These inequalities today are direct consequences of Australia's colonial history, which has included violence, massacres and warfare, intentional destruction of culture and families, theft of land and removal of people, and imposed governing structures that continue to oppress and divide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We advocate for First Australians justice because, although the majority of Caritas Australia's work is done beyond Australia's shores we recognise that, as an Australian agency, we are also impelled to address issues of poverty and injustice at home. We consider it a core part of our Mission to confront the inequalities that persist today as the legacy of colonialism, dispossession and silence.

We advocate for policies which uphold the human rights of First Australians by ensuring their partnership in decisions which affect them. Having their diverse voices respected and represented in decision-making processes is of great importance to our First Australian communities, who have often had decisions that affect their lives and communities forced upon them by authorities.

This call also reflects the Catholic Social Teaching principle of subsidiarity which requires that decision-making is made by the people most affected by the decisions.

For information about our 13 partner-led First Australian programs: www.caritas.org.au/learn/countries/australia

We can achieve change if we work together in solidarity. Please join our campaign.

