

19 March, 2019

## AUSSIE SCHOOL KIDS GRAB A BUCKET FOR WORLD WATER DAY

Over 600 million people globally do not have access to clean water, and 2.3 billion live without basic sanitation<sup>1</sup>. In Africa alone, a lack of water means women and girls need to collectively devote 40 billion hours a year to walking for its collection.<sup>2</sup>

It's statistics like these which have tens of thousands of students and community supporters all over Australia gearing up to fundraise for Project Compassion this [World Water Day](#) on 22 March, in support of humanitarian aid programs and to drive change in communities experiencing poverty globally.

Caritas Australia Head of Engagement and Sustainability, Richard Landels said, "According to the United Nations each year, more people die, the majority aged under the age of five, from diseases caused by dirty water than from all forms of violence, including war."<sup>3</sup>

"A lack of clean water disrupts the education of young people and robs communities of income and food, which is hard to comprehend - even in a country like ours which is feeling the burden of drought."

"That's why we're asking participants of the Water Challenge to go the extra mile and put themselves in the shoes of others experiencing poverty around the world," said Mr Landels.

For 7 days, participants are asked to save water wherever possible; such as during showering or cleaning their teeth. The aim is to save five litres of water each day.

On World Water Day, Caritas is asking supporters around Australia to collect up to five litres of water in a bucket, and walk up to three kilometres to show solidarity with children around the world who don't have immediate access to clean, safe drinking water.

This year, students are finding inspiration for the Water Challenge from [Peter](#), a 16-year-old schoolboy in the Solomon Islands who previously had to walk hours each day for water. Despite being surrounded by water, Peter's school in the Solomon Islands has suffered through water shortages for 60 years where groundwater sources have dried up and rainfall can be unpredictable.

Water in surrounding wells often made students at Peter's school sick or gave them rashes, but through the provision of a water pump, training and a management plan through a partnership with Caritas Australia and the local government, the school now has a safe, reliable water system, servicing around 1,000 people.

"Seeing the impact of clean water for people like Peter is hugely motivating for students to get behind Project Compassion," said Mr Landels.

Caritas Australia is part of one of the largest international aid and development agencies in the world and works in empowering vulnerable communities in 27 countries globally. Last year thanks to its

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO): Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. Available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. The Millennium Development Goals Report. Available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO): Water. Available [here](#).

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# PROJECT COMPASSION



supporters, Caritas reached over 1.85 million people directly through its emergency and development programs.

ENDS

[Watch a film featuring Caritas's work in the Solomon Islands](#)

[Watch a film featuring Caritas's work in Zimbabwe](#)

To learn more about Caritas Australia, see fundraising ideas for World Water Day or to make a donation visit: [lent.caritas.org.au/water](http://lent.caritas.org.au/water)

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