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MEDIA RELEASE

CRA to join national response to bushfire crisis

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) will collaborate with multiple Catholic agencies across the country to assist in a national response to this horrific and unparalleled bushfire crisis.

CRA will work in a coordinated way with other Catholic organisations such as the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Social Services Australia, Vinnies and many others to provide much-needed practical support, to assist with recovery services, to help keep families together and to help people rebuild their lives.

Some of CRA's 150 member institutes have networks of ministry across the country, including in rural and remote regions. A Rural Christmas Appeal has been run annually for twelve years to raise funds from religious members for drought-afflicted communities which are then distributed by religious working in these areas, directly to those in need. CRA aims to continue to work with members to assist those afflicted by the bushfires, in collaboration with other Catholic agencies and government bodies, to complement the work taking place on the ground.

CRA recognises the heroic effort of state fire-fighting services and emergency personnel who have been risking their own lives to suppress the fires, including State Emergency Services and Rural and Country Fire Services in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. In addition, we acknowledge Australian Defence Force personnel and charity and other agency staff working tirelessly on the front line supporting people, rescuing animals, securing provisions.

"Catholic religious women and men around Australia offer fire-fighters, volunteers and agency personnel our prayers, our blessings and our sincere thanks," said Peter Carroll FMS, President of CRA.

"The video footage and photos which we have seen show pain, devastation, and decimation across so many rural communities. However, they also show bravery, selflessness and hope," added Br Peter.

CRA members offer our sincere condolences and prayers to all those people who have lost relatives and friends, who have lost their homes and businesses and to the thousands of people stranded as fires burn across our country.

As Australia experiences these devastating bushfires, we continue to pray for rain, relief and the generosity of friends and strangers as they work together to keep people, wildlife, livestock and property, safe and to re-build communities.

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