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MEDIA RELEASE: Caritas Australia supports new report outlining Australia's global role in vaccination roll out

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Caritas Australia, as a part of the End COVID For All Campaign, is urging the Federal Government to commit to supporting developing countries in the fight against COVID-19 before the virus mutates and renders current vaccines ineffective.

The new report, *A SHOT OF HOPE - Australia's role in vaccinating the world against COVID-19*, found that two-thirds of epidemiologists surveyed believe that the virus may mutate in less than a year if action is not taken now to prevent the spread of the virus in developing countries.

"According to the epidemiologists consulted for the report, the best method to prevent COVID-19 further mutating is vaccination, but many low-income countries won't reach 70 per cent vaccination until after 2030, so it is essential we intervene now," says Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO.

"We know from our work with partners in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines that misinformation is rampant, and getting enough vaccine doses to remote and regional communities can be extremely challenging, which has slowed down the vaccination response in both countries. This leaves the virus ample time to mutate and spread, putting already vulnerable communities into an even more vulnerable position."

"This is why the End COVID For All campaign is urging the Australian Government to immediately commit more funds and more vaccine doses to COVAX, the only global initiative working with governments and manufacturers to ensure vaccines are available to lower-income countries who may not otherwise be able to afford enough doses for their population."

"We implore the Australian Government to commit to \$250 million to the COVAX facility, as well as 20 million vaccines, as a part of our commitment to the long-term response and recovery to COVID-19 in our region and around the world."

"With a concentrated global push, we can vaccinate nine out of every ten people across the world by the end of 2022 – conceivably avoiding the most serious impacts of further mutations."

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NOTE:

Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO is available for interview.

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