

March 2, 2010

Media Release

### ***Help Caritas Australia Make Indigenous Poverty History***

*"We join with the other kids to practice craft, reading and sports. You can invite new kids to Kids Club, learn healthy ways of living and about the local culture of the Kimberley and its people,"* says Teneille, 9, a young girl from Derby attending the Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation's Kids Future Club.

The causes of Indigenous disadvantage, manifested in a scandalously low life expectancy rate 17 to 20 years lower than other Australians and lower standards of health, education, employment and housing are many and complex.

In the lead up to National 'Close the Gap' Day on April 2, Caritas Australia invites people to tackle tackling the root causes of Indigenous inequality by supporting Caritas partners in the small coastal town of Derby 200km north of Broome.

Jalaris Aboriginal Corporation promotes a holistic approach to increasing school attendance and raising academic performance for truanting children, including running an afternoon 'Kids Club' where Aboriginal children and their parents can become familiar with structured education, health and nutrition in a culturally relevant way.

*"I've learned to eat lots of fruit and fresh vegetables, cook barbecues and make healthy sandwiches. I know about the juvenile diabetes problem here,"* Teneille says.

The wider community has also benefited through a reduction in petty crime, increased employment, and improvements in community participation and health.

In the six weeks leading up to Easter, Caritas Australia will be raising money and awareness in Project Compassion, Australia's largest fundraising event for aid and development.

Caritas Australia is part of an international network that works in over 200 countries and territories, empowering communities to help themselves out of poverty.

With the theme '**Blueprint for a better world**', this year's Project Compassion focuses on the Millennium Development Goals, an eight step global action plan for halving world poverty by 2015.

Money raised will support Caritas Australia's work with local partners, who are improving their own lives through projects that address issues such as health, education, gender equality, water and sustainable agriculture, priorities which are set out in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Project Compassion 2009 aims to beat last year's fundraising effort of raising over \$8.7 million around Australia.

Donations can be made to Project Compassion by phoning **1800 024 413**, on-line at **[www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)** or by posting your cheque to **GPO Box 9830 in your capital city**.