

Talking action

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A LETTER FROM Our Executive Director

In strength and solidarity



Michelle Higelin
Executive Director

I hope that you and your family are staying safe and well through the challenges of another wave of COVID-19 in Australia.

I'm sure you'd agree that watching the news over recent months has often felt quite grim. But there is hope to be found among the hardships. When I talk to my colleagues overseas, their inspiring efforts to rise up in the face of adversity, helps me stay positive for what the future holds.

With your incredible support, ActionAid has been responding to some of the most urgent crises around the world. Working with local partners, our teams are on the ground, mobilising in Haiti and Afghanistan to provide emergency aid to displaced communities. You can read more about our response efforts on pages 6-7.

In so many places around the world, women leaders have been distributing lifesaving relief in hard-to-reach areas. As always, they are making sure that the humanitarian response includes women's unique

needs, and that women are included in decision-making. While this has become more dangerous in Afghanistan, ActionAid will continue to remain in the country and support communities in their hour of need.

Amid such challenging times, I am pleased to share some positive news from Vanuatu, where women leaders have had amazing success and we're thrilled to announce that we are now able to expand this program into Papua New Guinea. You can read more about this on page 4.

I've also enclosed our annual survey, which I'd be so grateful if you could complete. We really value your opinion about the work we are doing - because supporters like you make our work possible.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Higelin', with a long, sweeping underline.

Michelle Higelin,
Executive Director ActionAid Australia

SUPPORTING WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS



This July, our generous ActionAid community showed its support for women garment workers who are standing up to their employers to make their workplaces safe for everyone.

Thanks to you, women workers around the world will be able to build their courage and collective action to demand fair wages and safer workplaces. More women will now have access to workers' cafés, where they can get training on their labour rights, as well as legal and emotional support to deal with violence and harassment at work.

Supporters like you responded with inspiring generosity, providing not only financial support, but heartfelt messages of compassion and solidarity. We'll be sending these to our colleagues in Bangladesh to show the women we are working with that they have people in their corner, all around the world.

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE MOST INSPIRING MESSAGES WE RECEIVED:

"Stay strong together ladies! You deserve to be safe always, at home and at work. Very proud of you all!"

DEB, ACTIONAID SUPPORTER FOR EIGHT YEARS.

"My thoughts are with you all! You are brave women setting a wonderful example of courage and perseverance."

JOAN, ACTIONAID SUPPORTER FOR TWENTY YEARS.

"Congratulations on using your courage!! We women the world over are with you, as we too claim our freedoms. You inspire us."

ANAT, ACTIONAID SUPPORTER FOR SIX MONTHS.

AN EXCITING NEW beginning in the Pacific



Women across the Pacific are all too familiar with the impacts of climate change, which is driving more frequent and severe cyclones.

They are the first responders in a disaster, making sure everyone is safe and cared for. Despite this, they are often left out of decision making and denied access to vital information and resources to prepare and respond. The situation is even worse for women with disabilities.

In the wake of Cyclone Pam in 2015, ActionAid established the 'Women Talk Together' forums, which now

engage over 4,500 women in five islands in responding to climate change and disasters. More recently, we launched the 'Women's Weather Watch' initiative supporting women to use technology to share vital SMS warnings of impending disasters like cyclones. By learning how to interpret weather reports and communicate early warning messages, women are now able to reach half the population on the Digicel mobile phone network thanks to your support.

Such has been the success of Women's Weather Watch in Vanuatu that we are excited to announce this program will now be launching

in Papua New Guinea to respond to the growing threat of COVID-19. This expansion is testament to the determination and organising strengths of the women who have made it such a force for change in Vanuatu.

And now the women in Vanuatu have turned their attention to supporting women living with a disability to come together and share their challenges and needs. Last month the 'National Dialogue on Women with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action' saw 57 women come together with key leaders within the humanitarian system and the government.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: a tribute to Carina Martin



The ActionAid Australia team were deeply saddened at the recent loss of one of our longest serving and most cherished volunteers. Carina Martin volunteered with the organisation for over a decade supporting our fundraising team while battling a long-term health condition. However, as an ardent champion of women's rights, Carina's legacy will live on through an incredibly generous gift in her Will in support of ActionAid's work with women and girls around the world.

We're so thankful to have had the opportunity to work

alongside Carina, and we know that her compassion will live on in the women ActionAid is able to empower around the world.

A bequest to ActionAid is a transformational act of generosity which will empower future generations of women living amidst poverty and injustice around the world.

If you are interested in remembering ActionAid in your Will, please contact Anna Parente at **anna.parente@actionaid.org** or call **1300 66 66 72** for more information.

Michelle Higelin, ActionAid Executive Director, remembers Carina:


Carina was one of ActionAid's longest serving volunteers who gave so generously of her time and expertise in support of our mission to advance women's rights and end poverty and inequality. She was incredibly humble, thoughtful, and wise well beyond her years. Her loss has been felt by all of us who had the privilege to work alongside such a kind and generous human being.

We're so touched by this lovely tribute we've received from Carina's family:

Carina was quietly passionate about social justice and women's rights and determined to help in whatever way she could. Despite being born with congenital heart disease, she never allowed this to define her, or stop her travelling, enjoying life and volunteering for the causes that inspired her. Her medical team and friends were in awe of her courage, determination, and attitude to life. She never stopped standing up for what she believed in and was always in awe of people who rose above challenges in their life – never thinking about herself, only others.

Humanitarian Crisis

HOW ACTIONAID IS RESPONDING



The stark inequalities worldwide have shown us that a global pandemic is not just a health crisis, but also an economic crisis, a gender equality crisis, and so much more.

Around the world, we have seen rising food insecurity, an increase in violence against women and mass job losses, with people living in poverty hit the hardest.

Unfortunately, as in all emergencies, there has been a disproportionate toll on women, and other marginalized groups.

As part of the ActionAid community, you are standing beside us to help women claim their human rights, campaign against injustice and lead change for gender equality and social justice.

Challenging gender inequality and violence against women is essential if we are to tackle one of the biggest causes of poverty worldwide.



ActionAid staff have been distributing relief kits containing essential items like food, hygiene kits and soap.

Haiti

Haiti was hit by a catastrophic earthquake, leaving thousands dead and many people displaced. They are in need of urgent aid with women facing an increased risk of violence in temporary shelters.

ActionAid is responding on the ground providing immediate support through shelter, protection, cash and food assistance.



ActionAid partnered with SmartAid to deliver 60 oxygen concentrators.

India

A deadly second wave in India showed the world just how devastating the impacts of the virus can be with 400,000 cases daily.

ActionAid staff have set up helplines to provide up to date health advice and find hospital beds for those in need and with your support, we provided 60 oxygen concentrators to extremely vulnerable communities in regional and rural India.




Providing emergency relief on the ground, ActionAid is distributing water, food and clothing.

Afghanistan

The political instability in Afghanistan, compounded by COVID-19 and drought, has caused thousands of people to flee their homes and become displaced in their own country.

ActionAid has been working over the past two decades to advance women's rights and food security in seven provinces across Afghanistan, and is now scaling up immediate aid to displaced communities fleeing to urban centres.

If you are in a position to donate, please consider supporting our work by calling **1300 66 66 72** or visiting **www.actionaid.org.au/crises** as we respond to multiple crises around the world.



Thank you so much
for supporting women
around the world!

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ActionAid Australia
Level 2
25 Cooper Street
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010

1300 66 66 72
www.actionaid.org.au
supporter.au@actionaid.org

ABN 87 001 251 930