Celebrities, health workers, everyday Aussies stand in solidarity with vulnerable nations tackling COVID-19 on day Government announces free vaccine for Australians

SYDNEY, Wednesday 19 August - Australia’s major humanitarian organisations have joined with church leaders, businesses and health organisations in their mission to ‘End COVID For All’.

With news this morning that the Government has an agreement to secure vaccines for Australians, aid organisations leading the charge on the ‘End COVID For All’ campaign said it was encouraging to hear the Prime Minister bring assurance that Australia would look to secure early access to the vaccine for regional neighbours.

“We welcome the news this morning. Supporting each other and acting together is the only way out of this crisis,” said Tim Costello, prominent voice on the campaign.

“‘End COVID For All’ opposes vaccine nationalism, and while Australia might be rejoicing right now about this deal, we also acknowledge it’s only secure for us Aussies. We encourage the Prime Minister to continue his work and lock down vaccines for vulnerable nations in our region.”

“Because as this virus has shown us; this doesn’t end until it ends for everyone.”

Together with high profile supporters, from former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, to epidemiologists, CEOs, health specialists and celebrities, humanitarian organisations are asking Australians to pledge support for vulnerable nations who are battling COVID-19 with weaker health systems.

Today - on World Humanitarian Day -‘End COVID For All’ will be joined by prominent Australians including Carrie Bickmore, Sammy J, Adam Liaw, Dr. Susan Carland, Mel Doyle, and Benjamin Law. They will voice their support by ‘masking up’ and ask fans to join them in signing the ‘End COVID For All’ pledge.

Over 150 organisations and over thirteen thousand Australians have ‘signed the pledge’ to stand in solidarity with our neighbours and to encourage the Australian Government to continue to provide vital support to developing nations through this crisis.
It comes as close neighbours like Indonesia and the Philippines struggle to contain the virus, with the outbreak in India now the fastest growing in the world, with around 60,000 cases being reported each day.

Tim Costello continued:

"Many of our closest neighbours such as Papua New Guinea have no running water for thousands of school children to wash their hands. In Timor-Leste, there are only five ICU beds for the whole population and 70% of health posts lack access to running water."

In the world's largest refugee settlement, in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 40,000 refugees live in each square kilometre, meaning social distancing is near impossible.

Tim Costello called for Australians to join #EndCovidForAll:

"Aussies are kind and compassionate. Even though we are still battling the virus here, thousands of people have shown they are ready to show solidarity with those overseas, and encourage our government to be generous.

"Today, we stand together and say 'we can look after those at home and lend support to our global neighbours'."

Australians are being asked to join the call and sign the pledge at www.endcovidforall.com

To use the virtual reality 'End COVID For All' face mask on the 19th go to the @EndCOVIDForAll Facebook or Instagram.

ENDS

Notes to the Editor:

Images of celebrities, influencers and CEOs taking selfies with their #EndCOVIDForAll masks will be available throughout the day, click here for what is available (updated regularly)

For a full list of organisations supporting the campaign please click here.

Australian field workers on the frontlines of COVID-19 (Available for interview upon request): We have profiled five Aussies who are currently working in developing nations battling COVID-19 and have shared their stories (humanitarian workers, Paediatrician, aid workers and more). To read full profiles and access photos click here.

Photo Opportunities: Today, hundreds of doctors, nurses and medical students will be taking selfies with the 'End COVID For All' mask in their medical gear to show their solidarity with health workers overseas. Further images available on request.
Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association show their support for the End COVID For All campaign by wearing the End COVID For All masks.

Click here to download original photo

KEY IMAGES FROM THE FIELD:

For access to all images click here, B-roll for video is available here.

1. A Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) team in Beqaa, distributing bleach and sanitizing products to Syrian refugee.

   Photo: World Vision. Country: Syria

2. Children living in this remote village in Laos’ Houn District regularly fell ill from poor hygiene practices. The Hmong ethnic people who live here are not fully fluent in Lao language, so official information about good hygiene and sanitation was not easily understood.

   “It was so difficult to change the practices they have followed for such a long time, but I think the children are now happy to absorb the new information.
and make the changes. I try to lead the activities in a fun way, so we sing the ‘washing hands song’ and do the actions together," explains teacher Tou Phonmany.

**Photo:** Plan International.  
**Country:** Laos.

| 3 | Hygiene kits are distributed to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.  
**Photo:** World Concern Bangladesh.  
**Country:** Bangladesh. |

| 4 | Children attend a centre run by World Vision India in the community to provide learning support for children who are not in school. This gives them an informal learning platform and an open opportunity to enroll in school later. In spite of the lock-down, the centre has continued.  
**Photo:** World Vision.  
**Country:** India. |
Plan International Indonesia is responding to the COVID-19 crisis in East Nusa Tenggara Province where we have so far distributed 11,050 hygiene kits and 8,187 posters detailing the preventative actions that should be taken to curb the spread of COVID-19.

"The snakes and ladders game is really nice, we have played it already. Thank you very much for caring about us. We also practice the handwashing tips as suggested by Plan Indonesia’s staff. We now have a handwashing facility with soap which has been made using a repurposed jerry can.” Erna says.

Photo: Plan International.
Country: Indonesia.