



Media Release

Wednesday 26 August 2020

***\$80m pledge to COVAX AMC positive step on the road towards Ending COVID  
For All but aid budget must grow***

Australia's major humanitarian organisations, as a part of the End COVID For All campaign, have welcomed news that the Australian Government has pledged \$80 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to ensure vulnerable nations get early access to a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine, but have cautioned the use of funds from the existing aid budget.

Australia's funding will help ensure early vaccine access for countries in the Pacific and Southeast Asia and will assist in vaccinating frontline healthcare workers and those most-at-risk.

Tim Costello AO, spokesperson for the End COVID For All campaign:

"This is a positive step on the road towards Ending COVID For All."

"It is encouraging to see the federal government looking out over the Australian horizon to the global battle against COVID-19 and recognising Australia has a role to play to end COVID beyond our borders."

"However, we are concerned that this announcement is being funded out of the existing aid budget, which has already faced significant cuts in recent years."

"Fighting the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable nations shouldn't come at the expense of other vital aid programs, especially at a time when global poverty and hunger is rising, and existing diseases like HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria are climbing."

Pacific Friends of Global Health Board Chair Prof Brendan Crabb AC, and supporter of the End COVID For All campaign:

"Vaccines are not magic force shields for individuals, none of us are safe until everyone's safe. In that way, vaccinating all those in our region is essential, not just to protect those in need who deserve rich country support but it is also in our own enlightened self interest."

"It is important also to note that in low income settings, COVID-19 is likely to cause far more suffering from other diseases than from COVID-19 itself. Health systems just can't cope. In that way, we desperately hope that new and additional funds will be committed to the aid

budget to fund this and other COVID commitments for the region because we know that deaths from malaria, TB and HIV have already been increasing due to the diversion of testing and workforce attention to COVID in countries such as PNG.”

Misha Coleman Executive Director Global Health Alliance Australia:

“It’ll also be vital to ensure that the health workforce in countries like PNG are paid their salaries – apart from anything else because someone has to actually deliver any vaccine that is made available.”

Over 22k Australians and 190 organisations have now signed the End COVID For All pledge to encourage the Australian government to continue to provide vital support to developing nations through this crisis.

Last Wednesday thousands of Aussies took to social media to show their support for the campaign. Celebrities, faith leaders and healthcare workers took ‘selfies’ wearing End COVID For All branded face masks and explained why, despite ongoing challenges in Australia, they each feel compelled to stand in solidarity with vulnerable nations.

“It’s probably the first time the entire world has faced a common enemy, and as such we need to fight COVID-19 together,” [wrote Melissa Doyle in her instagram post.](#)

## **ENDS**

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- Tim Costello available for interview.

## **Notes to the Editor:**

For a full list of organisations supporting the campaign [please click here.](#)

Images of celebrities, influencers and CEOs taking selfies with their #EndCOVIDforAll masks from last week’s day of action: [click here for what is available.](#)

**KEY IMAGES FROM THE FIELD:** For access to all images [click here](#), B-roll for video is [available here.](#)

1		<p>A Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) team in Beqaa, distributing bleach and sanitizing products to Syrian refugee.</p> <p><b>Photo:</b> World Vision. <b>Country:</b> Syria</p>
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*Hygiene kits are distributed to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.*

**Photo:** World Concern Bangladesh.

**Country:** Bangladesh.

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*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.*

*During the distribution of the hygiene kits, we also promote healthy life habits and encourage communities to wash their hands often and practice social distancing measure. Disinfectant is also used to clean the hygiene kits before they are handed over.*

**Photo:** Plan International.

**Country:** Indonesia.