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## Media Release

### **AIA Australia partners with Relief Run and World Vision to raise funds for COVID-stricken India**

*Melbourne ultramarathon runner and AIA Vitality ambassador urges Aussies to join*

**Melbourne, 21 May 2021** – Life and health insurer AIA Australia has partnered with Relief Run, a global, virtual running event, and World Vision to raise lifesaving funds for the people of India devastated by COVID-19.

Leading the event is AIA Vitality Ambassador and professional endurance athlete Samantha Gash, who is also a World Vision Goodwill Ambassador. Ms Gash, a social entrepreneur and former *Survivor* contestant, is the co-creator of Relief Run, which last year raised more than \$1 million in support of Australian bushfire relief efforts.

Relief Run will be held over the weekend of 11, 12 and 13 June, allowing participants all over the world to run or walk 5km, 10km or a half-marathon at a location and time that suits them. Groups across schools, corporates and communities are encouraged to create an event and support the cause.

AIA Australia will be hosting its own staff run in Melbourne on Friday 11 June, which Ms Gash will lead. The company will also be contributing \$20,000 to Relief Run.

Other AIA Vitality ambassadors supporting the cause include Australian AIA Vitality ambassadors Bec Judd, Sylvia Jeffreys, Laura Henshaw, Steve Hooker, Anabelle Smith, Alisa Camplin and Marika Day, and New Zealand AIA Vitality ambassadors Dame Valerie Adams and Ian Jones.

AIA's Global Ambassador, David Beckham, will also be encouraging people across Asia to participate.

"The situation across India has been heart-breaking to see. Whatever we can do to help in any way is really important and I'm proud to support Samantha and this great initiative to raise vital funds and awareness for the relief efforts across India," he said.

After seeing the profound impact Samantha made with the bushfire Relief Run last year, AIA Australia and New Zealand CEO and Managing Director Damien Mu said he was proud to be involved in this effort for India.

"When Samantha brought the idea of the Relief Run to us, there was no question in my mind that AIA should be involved – this was simply about doing the right thing," he said.

"We have colleagues, friends and family directly impacted by the crisis in India, and I believe it is our responsibility to make a difference however we can."

All funds raised by Relief Run will go towards the World Vision's COVID-19 India crisis appeal, which is responding to lifesaving needs for equipment and supplies including beds, oxygen concentrators, food vouchers and tents for temporary COVID-19 care centres.

Ms Gash's connection to India is personal. In 2016 she completed Run India, a 3200km run from the west to east of India to raise funds for World Vision education initiatives. During her three-month journey, she visited some of the country's most poverty-stricken corners, forging lasting relationships with the families and children she met.

With India reporting a record number of daily deaths this week, and authorities fearing the worst is still to come, the fundraiser cannot come soon enough, said Gash.

“The scale of the tragedy in India is heartbreaking, but I feel confident the generosity of Australians can make a difference. I think every one of us has some connection to India and is devastated by the ever-increasing scale of loss. It is heart-wrenching to see the endless suffering of individuals and vulnerable communities that are now at even greater risk,” Gash said.

“When Australia was devastated by bushfires in 2020, the global community came to our aid. Now it’s time for us to pay it forward.”

With Australians supporting more than 23,000 children in India and their communities through sponsorship programs, World Vision CEO Daniel Wordsworth said he had faith in the kindness of Aussies and encouraged them to sign up for this year’s Relief Run.

“India and its people hold a special place in the hearts of Australians, and Samantha’s initiative gives us all the opportunity to stand in solidarity with them,” he said.

“We are very grateful for Samantha’s support, and her willingness to use her platform again and again to help others.

“I implore you to register for this run so we can help the people of India work towards an end to this grave humanitarian crisis.”

To find out how you can participate go to [www.reliefrun.com.au](http://www.reliefrun.com.au) or to donate to World Vision’s COVID-19 India crisis appeal go to [www.worldvision.com.au/end-corona-for-india](http://www.worldvision.com.au/end-corona-for-india).

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### **About AIA Australia**

AIA Australia is a leading life insurance specialist with over 48 years’ experience and a commitment to help Australians live healthier, longer, better lives. In 2014 the company launched AIA Vitality, a world leading, science-based health and wellbeing program, to the Australian market. In July 2017, AIA and its partners launched AIA’s health insurance business, now known as AIA Health Insurance.

In 2021, CommInsure Life was integrated into AIA Australia. The lives of more than 3.8 million Australians are protected and enhanced through AIA Australia’s unique value proposition of life, health and wellbeing. Our vision is to embrace shared value in championing Australia and New Zealand to be the healthiest and best protected nations in the world.

AIA Australia has been recognised with multiple awards, including the Women in Finance Employer of the Year Award (2018, 2019), Super Review’s Best Insurer of the Year (2018, 2019), iSelect Partner Awards Insurer of the Year (2019), Insurance Asia International Life Insurer of the Year (Australia, 2020), Shared Value Awards Corporate Organisation Leading Through Shared Value (2019) and Shared Value Awards Organisation of the Year (2020).

Further information at [www.aia.com.au](http://www.aia.com.au)

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