

## *Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal Update*

### **Situation Update:**

On the 17th of December, a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck Vanuatu, leading to significant damage across the capital, Port Vila. Images emerging from the city show collapsed buildings along its main street and a landslide at its wharf. Further landslides resulting from the earthquake have also been reported.

A subsequent earthquake and tremors have added to the devastation. The death toll has risen to 14 (Red Cross), with hundreds injured.

Directly following the Earthquake Global Mission Partners attempted to contact our partners the Churches of Christ Conference Vanuatu to check on their safety, and assess the greatest needs. We have been in contact with Pastor Owen Bani, CCCV Secretary General, and Peter Bryant, CCCV Project Manager, who are both based on Santo.

Initial reports indicate that there have been no deaths within the CCCV networks due to the earthquake. There have however been some injuries, and many people are emotionally affected.

There has also been some damage to the Sarabetu Church of Christ building. The community is waiting for an engineer's report, and is currently meeting outside under a temporary shelter. Sarabetu continues to operate as an Evacuation Centre for nearby residents, but all have now returned home.

There has been positive networking between the CCCV and the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM). ACOM organised a ship to travel from the Solomon Islands to Santo, to pick up items donated by the CCCV and Anglican members for their community members in Vila.

The ship left Santo on Thursday evening and arrived in Port Vila last Saturday, 4th Jan. Peter Bryant and Pastor Owen Bani travelled on the ship from Santo to Port Vila, along with a Bishop representing ACOM.

They were met by the Director-General of the Department of Agriculture at the wharf. There was a short 'handing-over' ceremony for the ACOM materials to go to the Food Cluster for distribution.



ACOM had coconuts, island foods & water for distribution through the Food Security & Agriculture Cluster, which the Director-General received. The Bishop visited the hospital and the prison for some additional distribution of food materials.

Elder Hilson Toaliu, the National President for CCCV, met Pastor Owen and Peter and assisted with the transfer of materials to Sarabetu Church of Christ. On Saturday morning, representatives of the 5 Church of Christ in Port Vila (including each of the Pastors) met with Pastor Owen, Elder Hilson and Peter Bryant for an official 'handing over' of the materials brought from Santo. Materials were then passed over to each Church representative for them to take back to their local area for distribution.



Images: Sarabetu Media

#### The materials delivered were:

- 100 cartons of 1.5L bottled water (each carton containing 12 plastic bottles)
- 5 medical bundles (courtesy of Medical Santo – one per church)
- 145 Dignity Kits for young women and 10 for lactating women.
- 50 mats
- 50 blankets
- 5 cartons of soap bars
- Island food (provided by Nasara Church of Christ, Luganville) was combined with ACOM food for general distribution

These supplies are being distributed through the church leaders to the community members. They distributed items based on geographic Cell Groups to cover everybody.

Peter Bryant reports: "In particular, the bottled water was most appreciated, most people commenting that their water supply was not clean. Furthermore, the mats were helpful for some people, with the 'Dignity Kits' and medical supplies well appreciated."



Images: Sarabetu Media

**Potential future needs for communities include:**

- More mats/blankets
- Island food
- Medical supports
- Water filters (with damaged main 'header tanks' town water is not clean)
- Trauma responses at all levels over an extended period of time and support for the Pastoral Carers
- Replacement and potential relocation of a water tank/slab at Sarabetu Church of Christ
- Repairs at Sarabetu Church of Christ
- Household items and repairs



*Image: Sarabetu Media*

In addition, there are many still in temporary accommodation due to property damage caused by the earthquake.

A second shipment of supplies was delivered from other islands on the 9th. The ship supplied fresh island food such as coconuts, banana and taro. This food was given by communities on other islands.



*Supplies ready to be shipped to Port Vila*

**Response to date**

Peter Byrant is currently in Port Vila, carrying out an assessment so that Global Mission Partners can begin recovery efforts. These will focus on essentials like the provision of drinking water, basic sanitary/health materials, and non-food items, including household items like blankets, mats, household kits, repairs to community shelters and trauma support and counselling.

To date, \$55,738 has been given to the Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal in total. Thank you for your generosity. The first transfer of \$13,284.11 has been sent, after administration costs.

Find the appeal at [www.gmp.org.au/VanuatuEarthquakeAppeal](http://www.gmp.org.au/VanuatuEarthquakeAppeal)