



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

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Dear friends,

Many of you will be aware of the devastation and tragic loss of life caused by Cyclone Winston, which hit Fiji on Saturday 20 February. Reports to date indicate that 29 people are confirmed dead, and around 14,000 people are sheltering in evacuation centers. Whole villages have been destroyed, particularly on the island of Koro where a relief and assessment ship is being deployed.

The Uniting Church has long been committed to assisting those in need, especially during times of crisis. I urge you to consider ways you and your church community may be able to assist in the relief and support effort and to keep those affected in your thoughts and prayers. Please consider contributing what you can, to stand beside our neighbours and to offer the practical support they desperately need at this time.

Share has set up an appeal with donations supporting UnitingWorld's partner, the Methodist Church in Fiji. The Methodist Church is the largest denomination in the country, covering an extensive network across 55 districts. President Rev Tevita Bainivanua has opened all church buildings for emergency shelter and has directed ministers throughout the country to assess and report on the extent of the damage.

According to UnitingWorld staff member Rev Dr Cliff Bird, who is on the ground in the capital of Suva, destruction *has been* "widespread and very bad."

"The Lau group of islands, Koro Island, villages on Vanua Levu and their township Savusavu have been hit very badly. Hundreds of homes have been lost, infrastructure damaged, farms, vegetable gardens, livelihoods destroyed. Water and power supply to many areas are still down," he said.

Donations will be forwarded to UnitingWorld and used to support the Methodist Church's relief efforts, including re-establishing healthcare and schools, replanting crops and livelihoods and 'building back better' to safeguard communities against future cyclones.

You can support the cyclone relief efforts through Share by sending a cheque or money order to:

Share Fiji Cyclone Appeal
PO Box 24154
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Alternatively, you can call **1800 668 426** or donate online at www.shareappeal.org.au

Please pray for these communities and for the relief and aid workers assisting on the ground.

With kind regards,

Dan Wootton
Moderator