

**Despatches #39**

**14<sup>th</sup> January, 2009**

**News from the WESTERN FRONT**  
**NZAID / K2 – and Flood Report**  
**VOLUNTEERS 09**

**Flash News – this bulletin**

**Floods Fiji**

Biblical scale flooding – mostly West Viti Levu

Ba Town for example under 12ft water. ...Nadi Town- 20ft at the bus stand and 12 ft in town – but repeatedly under over seven days.

Major bridges down, roads like the Somme – cut constantly. About 11,000 people in evacuation centres. Damage over F\$50M . Rainfall heavy like over 1000mm , probably close to 1300mm .

Our WG warehouse depot saved by flood - gates that held water back....we had 45cm in yard and zero water inside warehouse . Zero cargo damage . One night waters came up floor plug holes and we fought bucket brigade til 200am .

11 dead either drowned or under landslides – and counting.

**Koroipita**

Minor scouring of road metal.

Crusader Crossing still not overtopped – minor erosion near one wing wall.  
Crop damage – tapioca (rots), eggplants, bananas due to 60km/h wind gusts.  
No building damage.

Naikabula Road cut for five days now – mud city.  
Koroipita well designed, well built and well kept.

## **Squatter Settlements**

Evacuated. Mostly on flood plains – up to 2m deep and deeper – up to four times and more to come.

HART homes (concrete homes on highway side 4km from Lautoka) 2m under.

Need food, water, **bedding, linen** , and **school supplies**....we probably have too much clothing coming already .

I have written a Plan/Policy document for the club, what we can do and what we can pay for , and a procedural document for shipments.

Rotary Lautoka has put up an initial F\$10,000 and expects to see this double with incoming donations ...this to pay for local end charges , Customs , Port service charges, port forklifts etc etc for the flood of containers and air shipments already arriving .

Peter has not been active at the field distribution end – his job is logistics and guiding the deluge of goods through the port and to the warehouse .

## **Rotary Club of Lautoka/Rotahomes**

Activating small **warehouse** to receive goods, sort and distribute.

We expect to be inundated with inbound shipments from well-wishers overseas. This could create a nightmare with no proper shipping documentation sent in advance, no packing lists, bills of lading etc.

Customs insist goods must be shipped to a registered charitable trust in Fiji, like the Red Cross, or the Rotary club of Lautoka – or pay duty.

## **Emergency boxes ...ex NZ**

In typical Rotary fashion District 9920 was quick to act and airfreighted 250 emergency boxes . These contain a great mix of restart stuff for a family ...scissors , sheets , tarp , first aid , fishing gear , etc in a container that can hold water . The club seniors were straight on to this distributing 170 of the boxes (balance to Nadi club ) to very remote areas back of Ba and Sigatoka . This was covered on TV – the people were impressed . Distribution

proceeds as they find needy cases even close in to Lautoka , where official relief efforts seem to have blind spots .

Rotary Club Lautoka is a registered Trust . There is an expectation my company WG will discount and even pay for all local end charges (up to \$F850/20ft container) and even all transport and even distribution !! – well not so. At a time when all companies are struggling I cannot become DIK-Fiji (Donations In Kind Fiji) but I will help as usual..in fact WG is waiving or discounting all our fees but we cannot pay wharfage etc . A WG truck has been one of the first out there delivering water and jerry cans to settlements .

The **policy and procedures documents** (2) describe what we can do, can't do and who pays for what etc. One tip: avoid small shipments like 2 to 10 cartons of anything. For these contact your District and see if they are consolidating a container and put them in that. Please do not send anything before reading these 2 documents ...request and I will email to you .

## **K2 in 2009 NZ AID and all that**

Briefly, we are on target for NZ AID funds in 2009. We submitted a monster 110-page document to NZ AID to establish the legal, structural arrangements, the accounting and oversight protocols, reporting systems etc to hopefully qualify for the first of a two-phase **General Funding Agreement**. (GFA).

We may be in a position to sign a GFA in March. That is only 7-8 weeks away. There are rigorous processes to go through still in Wellington and doubtless there will be another 110 pages on something. The first (critical) tranche of \$'s will pay for engineering design and approvals processes.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Is already underway, Paid for by the Govt of Fiji – they responded to our submission in 2 weeks, with a grant of F\$21,400. A scientist friend in Suva , Dick Watling is donating his expertise ..the costs are for ancillaries . Dick is the top environmental scientist in Fiji . We need this for momentum and (morale!).

## Phase 2

Advancing. Involves agreeing on the selection criteria, tendering, selection of a local Auspicing entity who will provide oversight and lead the governance board. This will (again) include a rep from an international accounting firm.

## 3H Grant

We made our first report to Rotary Intl . on the progress ...or rather lack of it, on spending the first tranche of 3H grant funds . RI has been very patient – we have had these funds in the bank for over a year now ! We have earned a little interest . PDG Lew Pretorius and Jan Pretorius were very helpful in getting this report away on time .

This NZAID approvals stuff could fill several pages, lets move on...

## Volunteer Teams 08

The official tally of volunteers who have **served at K1 to date** is;

### Medium term (1-2 weeks)

Tasmanians	207
Victoria/SA	151
NSW/ACT	103
NZ	101
USA/UK	41
Locals/Other	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>704</b>

### Short Term (2-3 days)

**450** – mainly ex USA( Rustic Pathways) and locals

This does not include the 3 long term volunteers (2-3 years) and the Site Support Volunteers (SSV s) who come in ones and twos for 1-3 month tours.

Last year, 08, saw the rise of “Voluntourism” – a limitless source of volunteers, but the core teams, the experience pool, is still the Rotary FAIM teams and the SSV’s.

## Cookhouses, Retaining Walls, Drains etc

These were some key achievements in 08 – funded mostly by a grant of \$97,065 from Govt of Fiji. This was received with one week to spare just before the arrival of the first teams in 08.

We built from Govt funds ...

- 70 (of 73) cookhouses...ongoing
- 10 concrete breezeways, plumbing 32 washtubs
- Drains
- Etc

From other sources

- 2 x single unit Rotahomes plus double TSK
- 2 x country area full size homes + TSK
- 40 breezeways
- Lots of maintenance items
- Major retaining wall – still underway
- 32 wash tubs

From the Vodafone/Rotary/ DTH Water for Life 3H Grant

- 2 x reservoir tank plus water lines to upper level homes
- Etc

## Volunteer Teams 09

Guiding principles at this time are;

NZAID funds are critical – ie timing of receipt

Worst case scenario is funds come later than say April , and engineering takes 2-3 months, net effect too late for teams to build any homes at K2, but the new base depot and workshop shed Great Hall could be a prospect still ...read on

We will **more likely** gain access to the site for the new depot , the accommodation and meeting hall (Great hall ) /office at K2 by say June, and the earliest teams could be involved in developing that complex – fencing the workshop, the hall, the office, accom, rooms etc.

This suggests accommodation for most of the vols this season will be a rented home in Lautoka – for most if not all of the season.

In the worst case scenario, we need to restrict the **number** of teams booked to not a lot more than are already booked – that is 12 teams.

They are;

- May           1. 11-15<sup>th</sup> Rotorua West. Ben Benfield (8)
  
- June           2. 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks Albury Nth. Kevin Scanlon / Alf  
Armstrong
3. Hands up Holidays Chris Hill AKL
4. 25 June – 4 July St Peter’s College ADL
  
- July           5. 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks RC Fairfield NZ (5-7) Lynden Clements
6. Mid July RC Stanthorpe QLD (8) Hal Lyons
7. 18-31<sup>st</sup> July RC Portland (+ Ballarat?) Steve Ellis
8. Late July/early Aug RC Salamanca Gill Whitehouse
9. June-August (unspecified) RC Whakatone (13) Barney Gray
  
- August 10. 10 days RC Wangoniu Dennis Brown
11. Unspecified RC Waiuku – Glyn
  
- Sept          12. 1st week – RC Ellerslie Sunrise. Ian Jenner

This does not count local teams or hordes of Rustic Pathways, USA, and Rosie Tours (schoolies), AUS, volunteers, who may be counted out or severely restricted if we cannot start building homes as such in 09 ...in other words priority goes to Rotary teams .

This is not to say I have closed bookings for 09, but this is prudent advice to avoid a flood of applications.

Last year we found work at K1 and it was very constructive. At a push, we could do that again in 09, but choices and funds are limited. Well, non-existent really. I would have to invent sub-projects again, and as a fall-back if all alternatives fail at K1 ...and everything gets v v slow at K 2 ...then we could send teams to the country areas to build homes for folks out there like the good old days – but that would only be as a fall-back for pre-booked teams .

There are many maintenance jobs to be done at K1. Some of the shutters need repainting etc. This suits smaller teams and even individuals.

The earlier a team books, the more uncertain in terms of

- funds
- weather.

Last April and even May was still wet and hot. Expect the same in 09.

It is comforting to know that the Fiji Govt is so responsive, generous and really fast. I cannot assume this in 09 because the floods have devastated infrastructure in Fiji .

With all this in mind, I sent a strong message to NZAID to accelerate their aid funding processing. The response was better.

It is time regional and EU governments delivered on their promises to get aid to the people, perhaps not the Govt of Fiji, but to the people.

### **Mrs Leba Lewasau (RIP)**

Many volunteers will remember Leba. She has seven children and her husband was killed in the mine. Sadly, she died, at home with her kids in attendance.

She had been in great pain for a year with cancer. We made it as comfortable for her as possible, to die in her home. This was beyond any tragedy that I had seen before. Many helpers rallied, she was surrounded by love from Rotarian and others like Lorraine Cairns and overseas donors.

The question then was – what happens to the kids? While Leba was alive we all agreed they should move to their uncle's farm 1km down the valley. We have just built a steel frame standard sized Rotahome for them there. This was from a donor in Geelong – sent a long time ago via Barry Bell.

We apologise for the delay but in the end this is an excellent use for the **steel-frame home** and we really appreciate the donation. Vol Ms Willy Heywood and her son Grant built the steel home which required skills we do not have.

We will cover ongoing school fees and provide ongoing support.

Relatives who turned up for the funeral who had never been seen earlier, tried to claim the kids, pulling in all directions. They were advised to move on.

We remember Leba in all her dignity, calm and caring.

Since then we have had other deaths at Koroipita as expected in a community of 350 people. The town rallies and we sponsor coffins etc

## **Community Development**

Ongoing works on income generating projects (eg orchids) and counselling and training for the Town Council.

Town Clerk Ms Keleni has left the town and moved to Nadi. A new replacement Ms Neha has been appointed. She is very computer savvy and organised.

The Dept of Social Welfare launched a national campaign to tackle domestic violence. The Zero Tolerance program was launched at Koroipita and we received a lot of publicity. Since then one husband has been evicted for repeated wife-bashing.

Serial abuser Agent Vinod is still seemingly immune from prosecution. His brain has been addled by kava and his legs look like pterodactyls .

## **Education Support 2009**

It is January – the mums will start screaming for support to get their kids into school. We are ready, we have \$3095 and AVI volunteers Colin Schasser and Rebecca Beisler are gearing to pay school fees and other costs direct to schools. Sounds easy – big job ahead!

Long time supporter and donor Liz McDougall is due up from Sydney to help.

The kindy graduation and education excellence awards night was a hit ...you should see the littlies in their satin gowns and mortar board hats .

## **Bridging Funds**

Even when the first tranche of NZAID funds are received – there is a delay until the engineering plans are approved etc – before we can get onto the K2 site to build anything. Yes, that's likely to be the Great Hall, expect a delay.

So how do we keep foreman Saten, Bigfoot and the boys employed, with money to buy materials for jobs at K1 in that gap period?

The answer is;

- we do have some funds to complete three cookhouses and add gutters etc
- that retaining wall and some drains and a major drains at the East Bank
- road works
- some maintenance funds – shutters etc
- I will have to find funds to build a town office – and there is a prospect for this

and the new prospect – **country Rotahomes.**

We built a country Rotahome last year and we are about to build one near Nadi – and likely another in the hills behind Lautoka.

Donors like to donate homes and this is the answer.

There are some families still needing homes in them thar hills and we can get to them in the next few months. Watch this space, if I sing out for funds for country homes please respond ....but for the moment – hold fire. We have a list of jobs at K1 to get done first.

## **Conclusion**

- Some distraction with flooding relief
- NZAID funds soonish – engineering to start
- Suggests field work in K2 in June or thereabouts
- 12 teams booked, can accommodate say 2 more, preferably later in the year
- SSV plus one or two side-kicks welcome any time but don't come till late April, earliest due to heat and monsoons.

This makes my 18<sup>th</sup> cyclone, 4<sup>th</sup> military coup, countless floods, 500 forest fires.....so 2009 better not be boring.

Cdr Peter D

GNQ Pacific GenO/39-09 Classified