

14 January, 2011

Devastation in Queensland and other parts of Australia



As we all watch in horror with heavy hearts as these tragic events unfold, **Disaster Aid Australia**, together with its international partners Canada, USA, UK & Ireland have offered to assist in any way we can. Although our charter is to provide humanitarian aid in developing countries, we cannot stand by without making that offer.

Disaster Aid Australia General Manager, Jenni Heenan said, "we have been in contact with the Queensland government authorities offering support and aid in the form of tents and also the expertise of our Disaster Aid Response Team members. Our teams recently returned from flood devastated Pakistan and are on standby to assist should the authorities make a request."

Today, Disaster Aid Australia also contacted the Victorian authorities to offer assistance to those in Western Victoria who have been evacuated from their homes due to floods. "They know we are here if needed," said Jenni Heenan.

Rotarians working with Rotarians ...

Against this backdrop of loss and suffering in Australia, here is a letter from Rotary President Zahiruddin Khan in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Addressed to District Governors in northern Australia, it is heart-warmingly self-explanatory:

Dear DGs. Anne B. Brand, Joan Wilkin, John Randel, Eric Wood, Judith Hendersen, Allan Church:

Greetings from Rawalpindi, Pakistan. I have been following the devastation caused by the recent floods. I wish I could find a better time to correspond with you. I have been in touch with Rtn. Eb Friedrich, Chairman, Disaster Aid Response Team Committee, Distt. 9800 Victoria who has been very kind in bringing me up to date on the devastation caused by recent floods.

I want to register our deep concern and anguish at the recent flood damage and offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of 11 victims who lost their lives as a result of the floods. May God Almighty rest the departed souls in peace and give strength to the bereaved families to bear this loss with dignity. Amen.

I read today that there were 11 deaths as of yesterday. I pray that is the last death caused by these floods. Consider yourself lucky in a way, that you have Eb Friedrich, Disaster Aid Australia and the resources to provide food, shelter and relief not to mention Prime Minister Julia Gillard's announcement of income assistance to workers affected by floods.

We had floods 4 months ago, and millions are still homeless and at the mercy of nature's doings. EB Friedrich and his several colleagues were here overseeing relief activities provided by Disaster Aid Australia in Pakistan last year. He mentioned that some of the equipment was indeed donated by clubs from your districts for relief efforts in Pakistan. We are indeed grateful for all the help extended by your districts last year. I have been exchanging correspondence with Eb on this subject. He mentioned that things were under control.

I can very well imagine the damage caused by floods. We have had unprecedented floods that played havoc with the life of more than 20 million people.

Please convey our warm regards and sentiments to all Rotarians in your district.

Yours in sorrow,

*Pres. Zahiruddin Khan
RC Rawalpindi Central
Distt. 3272 Pakistan and Afghanistan*

Footnotes

- PP Eb Friedrich is a member of the Rotary Club of Woodend (Vic.) and was in Pakistan for four weeks recently as a DART (Disaster Aid Response Team).
- BUILDING COMMUNITIES. BRIDGING CONTINENTS. Our RI theme has been given even *more* meaning already this Rotary year.

For further information please contact Jenni Heenan, General Manager, Disaster Aid Australia on 1300 881 913 or 0419 135 635.

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