

Caritas Australia's Christmas Appeal helps communities vulnerable to natural disasters.

This year Caritas Australia's Christmas Appeal focuses on supporting communities across the world that are most vulnerable to natural disaster, recognising that it can take years for them to recover and that being prepared is critical to survival.

The campaign features Tupou and Pauline, two survivors of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption in 2022 that brought with it a devastating tsunami.

Tupou and her extended family were preparing to welcome her new grandson into the world when the volcano erupted and the tsunami hit, leaving her home flooded. In the aftermath her family relied on emergency supplies and psychosocial support from Caritas Tonga. Tupou speaks to the continued challenge of rebuilding among fear and anxiety of further disaster, stating that "people's minds are still in critical condition."

Pauline is a mother of six who fled with her family to shelter in a local Church for a week following the disaster. This experience made her realise that her community needs an evacuation centre with the right facilities and supplies to keep people safe. "It can be a safe place for everyone who is running away from cyclones, tsunamis, and volcanos" Pauline said. Today, Pauline works with Caritas Tonga as a Field Officer.

In the spirit of giving this Christmas, your support can help provide resources to people just like Tupou and Pauline in communities across the world. These resources include the distribution of food parcels in the aftermath of disasters, the building of evacuation centres, establishing warehousing for essential supplies, and the provision of psychosocial support.

Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia's CEO said of the appeal, "while we are busy preparing for Christmas, many people across the world are preparing for the worst. This is particularly true in our region where the cyclone season looms, threatening inevitable natural disasters."

"Christmas is such a special time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and God's unconditional love for us all. In this spirit, and as one human family, we are reaching out with love, hope and compassion to our brothers and sisters around the world this Christmas."

To support Caritas Australia's Christmas Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/christmas or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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