

Caritas Australia launches a Vanuatu earthquake appeal

At least 14 people have been killed in Vanuatu following two earthquakes in 24 hours, impacting an estimated 116,000 people.

Hundreds of people are injured or trapped following the collapse of buildings resulting from successive 7.4 and 6.1 magnitude earthquakes. As rescue efforts continue, the death toll is expected to rise. The Port Vila hospital has been overwhelmed, having also sustained damage resulting in the closure of operating theatres.

Two major water reserves that supply Port Vila have also been destroyed, with assessment into water supplies ongoing. Major damage to infrastructure has been sustained, impacting communications, airport runways, bridges including the Tagabe, Teouma and Black Sand bridges, and the main port

As part of the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CANDO) Caritas Australia will be supporting on the ground through its partners. These partners are assessing the situation, and are ready to respond to the humanitarian requirements, which are likely to include emergency shelter, food, and other essentials, as well as psychosocial support.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Manager at Caritas Australia said, “Vanuatu, and particularly Port Vila, has been devastated. People are now trying to recover and perform rescues with damage to infrastructure such as bridges, telecommunications, water supplies, and the local hospital.”

“Many are fearing further disaster as Vanuatu is one of the most susceptible countries to natural disasters such as earthquakes, storm damage, flooding, and tsunamis. These disasters are unfortunately the most common place at this time of year, when many of us are celebrating and enjoying a break.”

“As we embrace the festivities, we must remember that our brothers and sisters in Vanuatu, who need our compassion and support as they recover.”

To support Caritas Australia’s Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal, visit <http://www.caritas.org.au/vanuatu> or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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