

New Zealanders urged to donate responsibly following Cyclone Yasa

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Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasa has caused havoc overnight across Fiji, at the end of a year when the COVID pandemic has already devastated the tourism industry and disrupted lives.

Reports are starting to come in of houses flattened and roads flooded, following powerful winds that reached 350km/h. A 30-day national state of emergency has been declared by the Fijian Government.

Many Non-Government Organisations in New Zealand are waiting for damage assessments so they make a decision on how to best support a response. However, there is already concern about whether Fijian authorities will soon also have to deal with large volumes of unsolicited goods being sent by the New Zealand public.

Sending stuff can do more harm than good.

“We are a generous bunch, and the generosity of the New Zealanders following an emergency at home or in the Pacific is legendary. But we know from previous experience how disruptive goods sent by the public can be to a local emergency response”, says Aaron Davy, Humanitarian Manager at the Council for International Development.

After Tropical Cyclone Pam (2015) and Tropical Winston (2016) hundreds of containers filled with unrequested goods like teddy-bears, plastic bottles of water, perishable food and second-hand clothing, and even snow-skies were sent around the Pacific.

Much of it ended up in Pacific landfills. Local businesses desperate for customers, were undercut by overseas goods already available locally. Containers took up valuable wharf and then storage space, increasing costs to Pacific countries responding to the cyclone.

World Food Programme and Council for International Development have launched a campaign to provide guidelines about how to ‘Donate Responsibly’.

“The most urgent need in times of crisis is money, not stuff. No other type of donation can match its impact,” says Aaron Davy.

CID Media Release



How to send cash safely:

- Donate to a trusted humanitarian organisation in New Zealand. For a full list of accredited humanitarian responders, go to the Council for International Development's website www.cid.org.nz
- Use the same banks and businesses that you use to send remittances to impacted families or church communities in the Pacific
- If you still want to collect stuff, convert it into cash in New Zealand by selling it at a garage sale, then sending the cash.

“We urge banks and money-transference businesses to support humanitarian responses, by temporarily waiving transaction costs or keeping them at less than 3% during the emergency response so already stressed families can send cash to family overseas.”

Visit: www.donateresponsibly.org
www.cid.org.nz

The Council for International Development (CID) is the peak body for New Zealand's international development and humanitarian aid sector:

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