

## **Inner Wheel New Zealand Inner Wheel Australia Cyclone Relief – Fiji**

In 2016 a total of \$31 000 was raised through donations from Inner Wheel New Zealand and Inner Wheel Australia to help provide support in Fiji following a devastating cyclone. The Red Cross were the recipients, and following discussion the funds were released to support a new initiative which will provide an education programme, delivered at school, to ensure adequate preparation for future disaster.

Di Patchett  
IWNZ Past President



### **Media release**

**31 May 2017**

#### **Red Cross rebuilds cyclone-damaged school and provides ongoing support for community**

A rural primary school badly damaged by Tropical Cyclone Winston will be officially opened today, after being rebuilt by Red Cross.

Vunikavikaloa Arya School, in Nalawa, Ra Province, was badly damaged during Tropical Cyclone Winston. The category five cyclone ripped off the school's roof, devastated eight classrooms and damaged four adjacent teachers' homes when it hit in February 2016.

The Fiji Red Cross Society and New Zealand Red Cross partnered to rebuild the school under the Fijian Government's 'Adopt a School' initiative. The refurbished building and the teachers' homes will be officially opened by Major General Konrote, the President of Fiji, at a special ceremony today.

Fiji Red Cross Society Director General Filipe Nainoca said the project was a great example of partnerships in action.

"Working alongside us we've had not only New Zealand Red Cross, but Rotary, the Ministry, the Nalawa community, parents, the Mother's Club and of course our own volunteers. This project is a true example of the power of humanity in action."

Designed using the internationally-recognised Comprehensive Safe School Framework and a holistic disaster risk reduction approach, the newly-rebuilt school will be stronger and safer for students.

Construction started in January, with community volunteers working alongside builders from New Zealand and from Fiji's Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, gaining skills they are now able to use to repair other damaged buildings.

The process involved a complete rebuild of the roof, framing, windows, doors and internal walls of the school, as well as repainting and reflooring. The Taveuni Rotary Club provided new chairs, desks and blackboards for the classroom block.

More than just a rebuild, the project has also encompassed the psychosocial recovery of the Nalawa community.

New Zealand Red Cross President Dr Jenny McMahon says Red Cross wanted the whole community to benefit from the project.

"From the start we were clear that it wasn't just about physically rebuilding your school, but also about ensuring students, teachers and parents were better prepared for, and more resilient to, any future disasters. This way, students will be able to feel not only physically safer, but emotionally safer as well."

The school's new steel framing is able to withstand category five cyclones, ensuring that the school is strong and resilient for the future.

A Disaster Risk Reduction team, made up of the school committee, parents and students, will also ensure the community is well prepared for any future cyclones. The team will implement disaster management and education activities, such as evacuation planning, disaster simulations and first aid training, to help build resilience in the area.

Tropical Cyclone Winston, the largest cyclone ever recorded to hit Fiji, left 44 people dead and affected more than 350,000 when it swept across the country in February 2016.