



MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

The Hon Sussan Ley MP

29 March 2015

Update on Australian Assistance to Vanuatu

The Australian Government will continue to consult with the Government of Vanuatu on their ongoing needs in the wake of tropical Cyclone Pam.

Australian Medical Assistance (AUSMAT) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams have begun to return to Australia after providing critical assistance to Vanuatu in the wake of Cyclone Pam.

[AUSMAT](#) provided critical life-saving assistance following the cyclone including assisting with 26 medical evacuations from the outer islands and assisting staff at Port Vila Central Hospital treat 1,341 patients.

The Australian Urban Search and Rescue Team ([USAR](#)) assisted with urgent repairs to Port Vila Central Hospital so those injured from Cyclone Pam could be treated. The team also assisted with repairs to six health and 27 education facilities damaged by the Cyclone.

Australia will today provide additional shelter kits and tarpaulins for those families who have lost their homes, bringing the numbers of people assisted close to 13,000, in response to a request from the National Disaster Management Office of Vanuatu.

“I thank the AUSMAT and USAR teams for responding so quickly and assisting Vanuatu following the devastation of Cyclone Pam,” Minister Bishop said.

Minister Ley said demand for health services had now been stabilised to levels that local health authorities could manage, with AUSMAT personnel playing a significant role.

“In natural disasters, protecting the health of the population is a critical part of the response and recovery efforts,” Minister Ley said.

“The medical teams skilled contribution relied on highly trained doctors, nurses, pharmacists, radiologists and logisticians as part of Australia’s wider humanitarian response.

“I thank the 27 AUSMAT personnel for their dedication and support in assisting our key Pacific partners,” Minister Ley said.

The Australian Defence Force continue to support the distribution of Australian Government, NGO, Red Cross and UN agency humanitarian supplies to people in need including on Tanna, Erromango, Aneityrum and Efate islands.

Australia is working closely with the Government of Vanuatu as operations transition from immediate response to early recovery. We continue to coordinate our assistance closely with New Zealand, France, the UK, the UN and Australian and international NGOs.

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