

A plea to Kiwis, banks and businesses - send cash not stuff!

8th December 2020

The Council for International Development has launched a roadshow, plus a media campaign to encourage the New Zealand public to send cash, not stuff when responding to emergencies.

The new South Pacific cyclone season has just begun, and goes until the end April 2021.

“We’re a generous lot. In an emergency or a cyclone we want to help, especially if its Pacific neighbours suffering. But sending stuff can do more harm than good,” says Aaron Davy, Humanitarian Manager at the Council for International Development.

The campaign will involve a roadshow to promote how best to help in an humanitarian crisis, radio ads, and events.

The World Food Programme, in partnership with New Zealand’s Council for International Development recently launched a new website www.donateresponsibly.org to support kiwis to donate more effectively following a disaster.

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, 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.

The cost of shipping donated items are often three to four times higher than the net-value of the goods being sent from New Zealand. For the same cost of sending nine litres of bottled water, you could provide 14,000 litres of water from in-country.

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

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.

Remittances play a critical role following a Pacific crisis.

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

“It is even more important we do what helps the most, and send cash this year, given that the Pacific is already severely impacted by COVID lockdowns.”

“It’s about giving the public and business the facts and resources they need to decide the best way for them to support our friends and whanau in the Pacific,” says Aaron Davy.

Visit: donateresponsibly.org

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

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