



Lakeside Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pakenham has been transformed into an Emergency Relief Centre.

Responding to Coronavirus

“For the first time that I can remember, we are hearing a word spoken in the chambers and hallways of our elected officials.

“That word is ‘Adventist’,” says John Smilek, community liaison and coordinator for ADRA Victoria. “They are witnessing what we stand for – our values. They are witnessing what’s being achieved for their constituents and the local communities. As a result, they have recently passed laws so that this work can continue unhindered.”

As coronavirus restrictions shut down much of the nation, your support ensures ADRA programs around Australia continue to find innovative ways

to remain open to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable in the community. “As the situation develops, we will continue to find ways to fulfil our mission of service,” says Paul Rubessa, ADRA Australia CEO.

Due to increasing unemployment, the demand for emergency food services across the country has increased. But while the need for physical goods is at the forefront of people’s minds, ADRA is also seeing an increase in the need for mental health assistance.

Clients of the ADRA Blacktown Centre can still access support by meeting with counsellors over the phone or via Zoom.

“Isolation is difficult. There is a lot of anxiety and

CEO Message

I have met some wonderful people while working at ADRA.



One group of people I have regularly engaged with are leaders from other faith-based development and humanitarian agencies. What an amazing group of talented, supportive and

passionate leaders these people are!

On several occasions, they have complimented the work of ADRA – most recently highlighting our humanitarian work in the South Pacific through the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) consortia. That moment triggered a reflection of some of the things I hear about ADRA's work from other people. Yes, I do hear some criticism – and we listen to respectful, constructive criticism because it helps us learn – but mostly I hear comments like: “ADRA does great work”, “ADRA is everywhere” and “ADRA punches above its weight”.

Compliments like these are nice to hear, but ADRA's mission of service is truly a team effort. A team with God by its side. And I thank God for blessing and multiplying the best human endeavours – it is in His story of salvation that we find our motivation to serve others.

And then I want to say a big ‘Thank You’ for you – our donors, our volunteers, our church and the many other people and organisations that collectively bring about positive change in the lives of others in partnership with ADRA. Helping the most vulnerable would not be possible without you! Your generosity, your compassion and your willingness to be the hands and feet of Jesus humble and inspire me. With your contribution – and when we work together – amazing things happen like the support provided to bushfire ravaged communities this past summer, and now the vital assistance to even more vulnerable people facing the coronavirus challenge.

I also recognise and thank our committed and experienced staff who blend their diverse and specialist skills to improve the health, livelihoods and resilience of communities.

There is no doubt that any compliments ADRA receives are really meant for you. And I want to pass them on to you with my most sincere and heartfelt gratitude.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Rubessa". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Paul Rubessa
CEO
ADRA Australia

On April 22, Paul announced his departure from ADRA Australia. During his time at ADRA, Paul has seen significant positive change at the agency, including the launch of a five-year strategic plan, the incorporation of a new vision and purpose statement, and a reshape of agency finances to allow the greatest long-term impact for those ADRA works with. Paul says he has been changed during his three years of leadership: “My time at ADRA has changed me. I am far from perfect, but I see the world differently now – more compassionately and more generously.” After finishing with ADRA during August, Paul will serve as the Manager, Investment and Financial Services for the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thank you Paul for your insightful and humble leadership. The ADRA family will miss you.



ADRA Cambodia distributing personal protective equipment.

depression that's hitting people because of the uncertainty and fear," says Grace Copaceanu, ADRA Blacktown's Centre Supervisor.

"A lot of our clients say that their counsellor is the only person that they're talking to every week. So, we're glad that we're still able to maintain that human connection. And not just any human connection, but someone who's willing to listen to you, train you along the way and help you to cope with it."

On April 20, ADRA Australia launched an eleven-week, nationwide Emotional Resilience workshop via Zoom. Hosted by Pastor David Haupt, the National Director for the Depression and Recovery Training Program and the ADRA Director for the North NSW Conference, the sessions help participants build emotional strength in challenging times.

You continue to enable ADRA to respond to the coronavirus challenge not only in Australia, but also overseas. The ADRA network has mobilised to respond in many countries around the

world. In Cambodia, for example, ADRA is supplying personal protective equipment and education materials so that community members can make the right choices in their personal hygiene, sanitation and social distancing behaviours to prevent, control and respond to the coronavirus.

In Nepal, ADRA is supplying vital medical equipment, including ventilators and N95 masks, to Koshi Hospital in Biratnagar.

"The support includes 70 types of medical equipment required to respond to COVID-19, as well as to perform surgical treatment to other patients," said Sangita Mishra, medical superintendent of the hospital when receiving the equipment.

Thank you for your vital support of even more vulnerable people in their time of greatest need.



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Community Leaders Help Youth Connect



In December 2019, Westfield Fountain Gate shopping centre in Melbourne launched an initiative in collaboration with ADRA that aims to significantly improve life for vulnerable members of the local community.

Every Thursday evening, ADRA community leader volunteers from various cultural backgrounds visit Westfield Fountain Gate to talk with young people and refer them to professional counsellors, social workers or employment providers – depending on the needs of the young people.

“The community leaders’ outreach program aims to engage with youth at Westfield Fountain Gate to prevent anti-social behaviour,” says Rebecca Auriant, ADRA Director for the Victorian Conference.

“We try to identify if the young people require support with education, employment, youth services, legal, or mental health services with social workers and counsellors on the ADRA outreach community bus.”

So far, 10 African women have gained employment through the program and Fountain Gate has seen a decrease in crime and anti-social behaviour at the centre.

According to Selba Gondoza Luka, the CEO of Afri-Aus Care, who works closely with the ADRA volunteers, the project is underpinned by a deep awareness that life is hard for many young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and the willing ear and advice of a wise elder from their community can be life-changing.



Community leaders at Westfield Fountain Gate.



ADRA's outreach community bus.

“This is a great opportunity for us to work with Westfield Fountain Gate knowing it is a popular place for our young people to gather. We can interact and identify with younger people who may be experiencing problems in their life and provide services then and there via ADRA's outreach community bus,” she says.

Adrian Bower, Westfield Fountain Gate's risk and security manager, is thrilled to have so many committed and passionate community leaders onsite, helping the younger customers.

“Not only are we expecting to see the number of youth-related incidents decline, but we are also delighted to support our younger people with such valuable onsite services,” Adrian says.



What happens to my donation in times of disaster?

Immediacy in a disaster is crucial.

When a disaster strikes – and even before ADRA receives donations for that particular disaster – our staff or volunteers are usually already on the ground, assessing community needs, and in many cases, distributing prepositioned supplies.

When assessing community needs, ADRA staff or volunteers go out into affected communities to find out from the locals what the most urgent needs are and to determine what other charities and government agencies are also doing to help.

This is important so that we can ensure all people receive the help they need – equally – and that charities do not double up on efforts. This immediate response is made possible by money available in our Disaster Relief Fund: a pool of money ready to be activated as soon as a disaster strikes.

Once the needs have been assessed, a project proposal is quickly developed. The project proposal covers the areas of the response ADRA will help to meet such as providing food, water, shelter or a cash grant. It also outlines how we will deliver help, and how long the work is expected to take. Available funding is then split across the various aspects of the project to ensure that affected people, families or communities receive the help they so desperately need.

During large-scale disasters, such as the Indonesian tsunami or the recent Australian bushfires, the needs are often bigger than the available funding in the Disaster Relief Fund.



ADRA begins assessing needs after Cyclone Harold.

In such cases, a specific disaster appeal will often be launched.

When you give to a specific disaster appeal, your donation is vital in enabling ADRA to help people recover in the medium and longer terms after a disaster. When you give to ADRA's Disaster Relief Fund, your donation ensures ADRA is always ready to help people survive the first hours, days or weeks of a disaster.

Whether you give to the Disaster Relief Fund, or to a specific disaster appeal, your donation helps to save lives. Thank you for your generosity. You can continue to help ADRA to be always ready and always there in times of disasters by giving a regular monthly gift to our Disaster Relief Fund.

Visit adra.org.au/donate and choose 'Monthly Donation' to make your important gift online or call 1800 242 372 to talk to one of us.



Disaster Updates

Australian Bushfires



Tammy and Brett lost their home in Cobargo.



Even before Australia officially entered summer, multiple blazes were burning across the country.

Hot, dry conditions plunged the nation into the worst fire season experienced in decades.

Together with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, ADRA helped provide food and accommodation, water, hygiene kits, food for livestock, and generators to many communities around Australia.

ADRA's efforts in Bairnsdale, Victoria, were featured in an ABC Radio segment. Interviewer David Sparkes described ADRA Bairnsdale as "a highly organised hub of activity".

"At first glance this is obviously a scene of great generosity," says David. "But it's also a triumph of clever logistics and finely tuned organisation."

There was widespread support for the bushfire response from you, our ADRA supporters in Australia, but also from our friends in the Pacific. Mt Gravatt Seventh-day Adventist Church raised more than \$12,000 through their 'Let It Rain' bushfire fundraiser concert.

And in the Solomon Islands, a large interdenominational fundraising concert held at the Maranatha Hall raised over AUD \$32,000 for the bushfire efforts.



The 'Let it Rain' concert fundraiser at Mt Gravatt.

Thank you to the many ADRA supporters, and church and school communities that so generously donated to our Disaster Relief Fund – Bushfire Season Appeal.

With the partnership between ADRA and Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Australia proving to be an efficient way to help communities in times of disaster, a pilot of the Disaster Ready Church program was launched in March 2020. Presently piloted at three churches to learn, gain local input into the development of resources and make improvements, it is anticipated that the Disaster Ready Church program will be rolled-out across Australia soon.

The program aims to develop resilient churches who can help their communities during times of crises with compassion, Christian love and care. Churches are well placed to meet the needs of their communities in times of disaster because of their close connections with local communities. Through the Disaster Ready Church program, ADRA will provide training, tools, templates, and funding support to assist churches that wish to participate.



Disaster Updates

Cyclone Harold



Water supply restored in Tangoa Island, Vanuatu.



In early April, Cyclone Harold swept across the South Pacific.

By the time it made landfall in Vanuatu, it was a Category 5 storm with winds over 240km/hour destroying homes, farms and income.

Thanks to disaster preparedness measures and your generous donations to the Disaster Famine and Relief Offering in February, ADRA was there and ready to help. Before the cyclone even hit in Vanuatu, ADRA opened an evacuation centre on the island of Santo, which provided temporary shelter to keep people safe during the cyclone. ADRA-trained youth knocked on doors and transported vulnerable people to the centre.

“I want to thank ADRA for saving me from the cyclone,” says John, a member of the community who stayed at the evacuation centre. “We didn’t know where to go but you came with a truck and you bought us to the evacuation centre where you have provided us with food, water and other necessities. I am an old man and I want to say ‘Thank You’ for saving me and my family.”

“We were looking after 200 people in our evacuation centre,” says Graham Uzakana, ADRA Vanuatu Program Manager. “Their houses are flooded...and houses that are not cyclone-proof have been blown out.”

Immediately after Cyclone Harold passed, ADRA staff and volunteers in Vanuatu – as well as in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Fiji – in collaboration with their respective governments, began responding to their community’s most pressing needs.

The Tangoa Island community identified access to clean water as their first priority. The island gets their water supply via a submerged poly pipe which was damaged by the cyclone. With ADRA’s help, the submerged pipe was repaired, giving Tangoa Island community access to clean water once again.

Our Gift Catalogue has many gifts that help people devastated by disasters. Gifts such as *Fight Hunger* (\$9), *Crisis Food Hamper* (\$50) or a *Crisis Shelter Pack* (\$500) help people in Australia or overseas get back on their feet when disasters strike. Visit adra.org.au/gifts to choose your important gift.

Honouring Guy's Legacy



When Guy Eric Loane visited his lawyer to finalise his will, he made sure to make one important inclusion: a gift to ADRA.

Guy wanted to leave a life-changing legacy and he was particularly interested in having his gift foster spiritual good health. When Guy was making his will, he instructed his solicitor to contact ADRA and obtain the preferred wording to leave a legacy to ADRA.

Guy's legacy is now assisting the Solomon Islands Betikama Project as the impact of the project matched Guy's wishes. The project helps students at Betikama Adventist College to overcome negative social behaviour and improve school performance by offering the students counselling and training in life skills. Guy's legacy will contribute to the life skills training the students will receive.

Guy's gift in his will is already making a world of difference to the students of Betikama Adventist College.

Wendy*, who is in grade 11, recently discovered that she had been adopted. Desperate for a sense of belonging, the news sent Wendy into a difficult spiral. Others began to look down on Wendy, and because she was struggling with her sense of identity, she began to act out. She couldn't study and struggled to make friends. Thanks to the Student Wellbeing Project and Guy's gift, Wendy was able to attend counselling sessions. In these sessions, the counsellor



Betikama planning meeting.

shared with Wendy stories of women like Esther who also came from difficult pasts that they couldn't change. And yet, with God's help, they had a bright future.

After shedding many tears and grappling with her situation, Wendy experienced a breakthrough.

She started to believe in her own potential. And despite wanting to drop out of school, Wendy made it through to the end of the year and sat her exams. After her exams, Wendy thanked her counsellor for helping her to find value in herself and to continue her education.

*Name changed for privacy reasons.

Leave a Gift in your Will to ADRA as a life-changing legacy for people in need. Find out more at adra.org.au/wills or call us on 1800 242 372 to request a brochure. Thank you for your ongoing and vital support.

A Climate Change Champion



Teddy Miller didn't care much for ADRA.

He didn't know why they were in his community in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, and this gave him an unshakable feeling of unease.

All he knew was that several of his fellow villagers had attended ADRA workshops about climate change. Although Teddy was invited to attend these workshops, he didn't think they were relevant to him – they were for leaders in his community.

Everything changed on a grim and stormy Sunday evening, as Kamilo from ADRA PNG and Eric, an Australian volunteer, arrived in Teddy's community. Weary from navigating through mangrove-laden river systems, the visitors were faced with the daunting task of hauling their workshop materials over muddy slopes to find their accommodation on the far side of the village. Teddy spotted Kamilo and Eric as they trudged past his house and quickly rushed over to offer his help. When Teddy heard of the journey that Kamilo and Eric had ahead of them, he insisted that they seek shelter in his house, where they could eat and rest for the night.

The next morning, Teddy and his wife, Alice, helped Kamilo and Eric move the training materials to the workshop venue. Upon hearing about the workshop's themes while on the trip, Alice and Teddy decided to participate in the first day of the workshop. As Alice and Teddy began to learn about climate change, they became interested and decided to stay for the whole workshop.

Through various learning activities, Alice and Teddy realised that they play an active role in determining the impacts of climate change and disasters in their community.

On the final day of the workshops, participants



New Ireland community planning

were asked to elect a team of community leaders to champion the lessons from the workshops.

"I attended the climate change course for the whole week and the topics became clear to me, so when the community elected a new chairperson, I put my hand up for the position," says Teddy. His community representatives unanimously accepted his self-nomination.

Now Teddy is fully invested in the issues that affect his community.

"Since I became the taskforce chairperson, everyone in the community is happy with my work because I show good and transparent leadership in the community," says Teddy.

It wasn't long before Teddy began noticing changes in his community. At first, the changes were subtle; eventually, they became stark. The people in his community are beginning to use climate resilient food practices by cultivating traditional drought tolerant crops. The youth are beginning to take leadership positions within the community and are obeying traditional rules of forest and sea protection and natural resources preservation.

Today, Teddy is a champion of equity, transparency, and resilience in the face of a changing climate in his community.

Volunteer Profile



 Ranjit Gupta has been volunteering at community projects in his home country, Nepal, from a young age.

And, so, when he came to Australia to complete a Masters degree in Social Work, he immediately began looking for ways that he could give back to the community.

“I have been volunteering my whole life,” says Ranjit. “It’s not a career, but a culture.”

Once he settled into life in Australia, Ranjit began to volunteer for ADRA Australia’s head office in Wahroonga. With his skills and understanding of project design and development, various ADRA teams were eager for his help.

“Ranjit understands development as he has some experience with ADRA in Nepal,” says Kate Morrison, International Programs Manager. “He is motivated and ready to help wherever needed. Nothing is too much trouble for him. His can-do attitude is a real plus in a volunteer.”

With his wide range of skills, Ranjit has helped the team to create policies and project proposals, as well as contributing to graphic design tasks. And with his can-do attitude, he has learned skills that he is confident he can take into his future.

But one thing that Ranjit has truly valued about his time volunteering with ADRA is the sense of community that he has found within the ADRA team.

“Being an international student, it’s really tough to survive here, to have a stable environment,” he says. “I’m blessed with all my teammates. They give me family; they give me friends.”

Ranjit feels that volunteering, apart from a sense of belonging, also provides him with opportunities for his future.

“I think volunteering is very good for me,” Ranjit says. “It is the first step to entering a professional career.”

Ranjit wants his future to be all about serving his community, wherever he may be. And at some stage, he believes he will be back in Nepal, helping to improve the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in his home country.

“Nepal is a developing country,” says Ranjit.


“We need support workers or community workers who empower our community, especially the marginalised and vulnerable children and women. So my plan is to continue my work in this area.”

If you would like to volunteer at the ADRA Head Office in Wahroonga or at an ADRA project in Australia, register your interest online at adra.org.au/volunteer, or call us on 1800 242 372.



Share Your Story

We would like to profile your volunteer story. Do you have one to share? Email news@adra.org.au



Jodie packs and delivers food parcels to vulnerable people in her local community.

“ADRA helped me during a time of crisis and now I am helping others overcome their own.”

Jodie
ADRA volunteer

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