

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Australia: Tropical Cyclone Yasi

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

One of Australia's most powerful storms in a century, Cyclone Yasi, hit northern Queensland on 2 February, forcing an estimated 150,000 people to flee from their homes for safety. Australian Red Cross (ARC) has since upped their efforts in providing for the people's needs, mostly in operating evacuation and recovery centres.

To date, the Queensland government has extended its appeal on the state's floods disaster to Cyclone Yasi. The Premier's Disaster Relief Fund will cover damage caused by the devastating cyclone in North Queensland. People donating to the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal are encouraged to donate online or in person to free up call centre staff and phone lines for emergency calls.



Australian Red Cross staff and volunteers provide support to affected communities in Tully, Queensland.
Photo: **Australian Red Cross**

The Situation

Tropical Cyclone Yasi crossed the Queensland coast as a category 5 cyclone just before midnight on 2 February. No reports of fatalities or serious injuries have been reported although there has been damage to housing and infrastructure.

Areas suffering damage included the Cassowary Coast Shire, Innisfail, Silkwood, Mission Beach, Cardwell, Tully, Townsville and Ingham and to a lesser extent Cairns. Reports suggest more than 40 per cent of homes in Tully are expected to be condemned and 95 per cent have received some degree of damage. Projections suggest thousands of people across the region have been made homeless with many unable to return to their homes until repairs are made. Initially up to 200,000 recipients were without electricity. the Telecommunications network was down in some areas and likely to remain cut for several weeks, for example in Cardwell and Innisfail.

Heavy rain in Northern New South Wales and saturated catchment areas in the west and south of the state has caused flooding in a number of locations.

Victoria experienced heavy rainfall across the northwest and central regions of the state in mid-January which led to significant flooding across a number of locations. Heavy rainfall on 4 and 5 February caused flash flooding across a number of locations and further complicated the situation in a number of towns.

[<click here for contact details or a map of the affected areas>](#)

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

North Queensland communities are starting down the slow road of recovering from one of the biggest cyclones in Australia's history. While some return to their homes to start the clean up, many people are finding refuge in evacuation centres, or with family and friends.

Australian Red Cross is assisting cyclone-affected residents across affected areas, through evacuation centres, recovery centres and much needed outreach, knocking door to door and offering personal support in communities from Innisfail to Townsville.

In response to Cyclone Yasi, evacuation centre management remains a focus, however recovery services have begun in some areas. ARC is currently supporting two evacuation centres in Tully, one in Ingham, and one in Cardwell. More than 7,300 people have been assisted in these centres. Australian Red Cross is also supporting recovery centres in Tully and Ingham. Outreach is being undertaken in Mission Beach.

In response to the floods in Victoria, Australian Red Cross is supporting relief centres in Swan Hill, Red Cliffs, and Mildura. Australian Red Cross is supporting recovery centres in Kerang, Rochester, and Charlton and will head outreach in Loddon Shire, Newbridge, Laanacoorie and Eddington. Australian Red Cross has also provided registration, catering and personal support services to metropolitan relief centres in Narre Warren, Casey, Pakenham and Dandenong, all situated in Melbourne.

Australian Red Cross has assisted more than 13,200 people to find out about the safety of family and friends through the National Registration and Inquiry System. Australian Red Cross is also working with other organizations to provide personal support in this disaster

Emergency Preparedness

Australian Red Cross is helping people to prepare for emergencies, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable in the community – such as seniors and people with disability – to improve people's resilience both emotionally and financially to the impacts of emergencies.

Australian Red Cross is continuing to develop resources that equip people to help themselves, their households and their neighbours to be prepared and cope better if an emergency occurs. Many of the resources have been developed to acknowledge the added impact that emergencies often have on members of the community with needs relating to age, health and disability.

Personal support

Australian Red Cross personal support volunteers are providing emotional and practical assistance to people after emergencies to accelerate the rate of recovery of individuals and communities and enable people to better cope with longer-term impacts. The work of personal support volunteers goes beyond immediate relief. Personal support volunteers continue to work with communities in emergency-affected areas, visiting homes, attending events and supporting community activities to provide emotional support, information and referrals to recovery services.

Support for young people

Australian Red Cross developed multimedia resources for young people affected by emergencies, including a radio show of information and music, preloaded onto MP3 players and distributed in the immediate aftermath of an emergency and/or at key dates after an event. These resources provide advice and support for young people, to let them know they are not alone and that help is available.

Resources for children

An activity booklet for children entitled 'After the Emergency' has been developed to help children think about what has happened and be aware of the feelings they may have after an emergency. It will be distributed throughout the region by personal support volunteers, through community hubs, case managers and schools.

Resources for adults

A booklet entitled 'Coping with a Major Personal Crisis', developed after the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires, has been updated and is available online to help people who have experienced an emergency or other traumatic situation. It provides an insight into how adults and children have reacted in similar situations, highlighting ways that can help healing to occur.

Australian Red Cross also contributed to the booklet 'Looking after Yourself after the Disaster', a joint collaboration with the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement and beyondblue.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

In Australia:

- National Incident Coordinator, Phone +61 416 562 166; Email: ncc@redcross.org.au

Federation Pacific regional office, Suva:

- Aurelia Balpe, head of regional office, phone: +679 331 1855; email: aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org

Federation Asia Pacific zone office, Kuala Lumpur:

- Daniel Bolaños, operations coordinator, phone: +60 3 9207 5728, mobile: +601 2287 7305, email: daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org
- Patrick Fuller, zone communications manager phone: +6012 230 8451, email: patrick.fuller@ifrc.org.



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