



The power of your kindness.

It could be a phone call that dispels loneliness.
A safe home at last for a refugee family.
A future beyond prison. Comfort when disaster strikes.
Your kindness today is someone's hope for tomorrow.

the
power of
humanity





the
power of
humanity

Let your **kindness** today be someone's hope for tomorrow.

It's been a challenging 12 months. Yet when times are tough we see the very best of humanity.

These stories of hope are powered by your gift of kindness. It ripples across communities, towns and oceans to bring connection, safety and comfort when it's needed most.



Quintina, finding connection through a phone call during lockdown in Melbourne.



Kellie and the *Sisters for Change*, working to turn their lives around in Townsville.



Laurine and her young family finding safety and making a new home for themselves in the regional town of Harvey, Western Australia.



Hundreds of volunteers who came together in Vanuatu to rebuild their communities after a cyclone.

Thank you for your support of Australian Red Cross. It's helped more people than ever before. With your help, we can continue to be there to support people when times are tough, whenever and wherever they need it.

Over the last year, this is how you've helped...



201,000

calls made to clients and supporters to check on people's wellbeing during COVID-19.



1,500

people in the justice system supported through community projects, helping them to live safely and begin to break the cycle of disadvantage and insecurity.



83,715

people impacted by disasters and emergencies were assisted, 63 emergency events were responded to across Australia, with 313,477 people equipped to recover from and prepare for disasters.



600

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples supported across 9 communities, with 43 active Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led partnerships established.



35,000

people impacted by Tropical Cyclone Harold were provided humanitarian assistance by the volunteer teams of Fiji and Vanuatu Red Cross Societies.



4,000

refugees helped to settle safely in Australia, of whom 40% are children.



3,729

people across the Asia Pacific have trained in epidemic control and public health in emergencies.



2,337

people supported to restore family links broken by conflict, disaster or migration.



Kind words conquer loneliness

Tens of millions of people impacted and the world brought to a standstill.

C COVID-19 is a once-in-a-lifetime global health emergency. But this pandemic is so much more than a health emergency. It is a human crisis – attacking communities at their very core.

At the height of the pandemic in Melbourne, the worst-affected region of Australia, millions of people were forced into lockdown restrictions for a period of seven months, in an effort to stop the spread of the deadly virus.

It has been one of the longest and strictest lockdowns in the world, creating a devastating impact on people's mental health.

One of those people was Quintina.

At 65 years old, and suffering from cancer and chronic asthma, she was considered especially high-risk when it came to COVID-19.

Quintina and her husband also lived in one of Melbourne's worst hotspots, right across the road from an aged care facility that tragically saw the deaths of 39 people.

Because of this, she took every precaution available to her. She didn't open her door to anyone other than her husband's carer. She cleaned everything down with alcohol wipes, even her mail. She went out only when she had to – to doctor's appointments mostly - and when she did, she made sure she had a mask and a face shield, and stayed well away from anyone else who crossed her path.

The impact of isolation

She was in extreme isolation. **In the end, it wasn't fear of the pandemic that took its toll; it was loneliness.**

"When COVID-19 first hit, my husband and I thought we would be alright. But then we missed going for our Monday night dinners with one of my girlfriends. I missed doing the normal things like shopping, or going down to the lake to feed the ducks. You feel really helpless. It gets built up inside of you."

Not being able to see her family was especially devastating for Quintina. Cut off from her connections, she began to feel overwhelmed by depression and anxiety.

"There was this emptiness and loneliness of just having four walls around you. You start to think, what is the purpose? I was so depressed I thought I didn't want to be alive. The (pandemic) is probably one of the scariest things I've ever been through."

In response to their situation, Quintina's husband signed up to start receiving wellbeing calls from Australian Red Cross.

That meant daily calls from trained volunteers providing psychological first-aid. Someone to check in to see how he was going, someone to lend a listening ear, have a friendly chat, and provide some support when he needed it most.

Quintina was sceptical at first. But her husband told her *"Don't knock it until you've tried it."*

So she did. And she says the phone calls have been her lifesaver.

The power of connection

Being able to talk with a highly trained Red Cross volunteer, who understood exactly what she was going through and listened to her without judgement, enabled Quintina to feel safe, calm and connected to the outside world.

"When I speak to someone from Red Cross, I've released a lot of stress and anxiety off my chest. You're getting mental relief. You're finally able to release that pain, disappointment, loneliness that builds up. And it builds up, believe me."

In disasters and emergencies, although mental health and psychosocial needs are not always visible, they are nevertheless real, urgent and, in some cases, life-threatening.

Our work is underpinned by psychosocial wellbeing principles, which means we not only help people to stay safe and calm, but also better connected to their loved ones and their communities.

In any disaster or emergency, whether it's a bushfire, a collective trauma event, or even a pandemic, Red Cross' phone support services enable people to ask for information, share their feelings, discover services that are available to them, and feel part of a community.



“This service is one of the best things. The volunteers just let me talk and talk and talk and I feel so much better.

What it’s done for me is made me feel that I’m not alone on this earth, that I’m not doing this on my own. There are people that are caring enough to take time from their busy schedule to speak to me, a complete stranger. They’re there to make me feel better about myself and what I’m going through and what we’re all going through.”

Quintina says that she now looks forward to the phone ringing.

Such a seemingly simple thing – a phone call – has given her such a lift that she now feels

able to give back to her community, spending her time making hundreds of face masks for people who cannot afford them.

“The way I see it, the phone calls from Red Cross have been my lifesaver, and every mask I give to someone is a life saved too. So I’m passing that kindness on.”

That’s the true power of kindness. It creates a wave of hope that washes over us all.

*Due to lockdown and the risks to her health, we were unable to take a photo of Quintina. The images you see here are of another member of our Red Cross family, representing Quintina.

\$5,500 can...

train more than 100 Red Cross volunteers to support people who have experienced trauma.

\$28,800 can...

provide a friendly phone call every morning for a year to 30 people who are isolated to check in and make sure they're ok.

\$70,000 can...

help run an emergency operations centre to coordinate our volunteers across 2 states.

How you helped during COVID-19

Since the pandemic began Australian Red Cross has connected with more than 200,000 people.

With your help, we supported more than 65,000 Australians in quarantine and mandatory isolation with:



Over **14,500** meals each month



Over **125,000** check-in calls to provide psychological first aid, information and services



Over **3,500** relief packages

We also...

Translated health and safety information into 18 languages to support migrant communities.

Made 13,500 emergency relief payments and delivered 11,000 food parcels to help migrant families stay safe and healthy during the pandemic.

Adapted many of our existing services to keep helping people through tough times, including supporting:



1,400 clients at risk of homelessness



600 families who need support



2,300 people who are socially isolated



4,500 people who are elderly and live alone

We will continue to provide support where it's needed for as long as it takes.



Breaking the cycle

It's an understatement to say the *Sisters for Change* program has changed Kellie's* life.

When she first arrived at a prison in Townsville, Kellie was devastated over being separated from her kids and family.

She came up with an idea for a book called Mum's in Jail. It explains in a simple way what life is like for mum inside, and helps make things less scary for little ones.

It also comes with a postcard and pay phone instructions, helping other mums like Kellie let their children know they care.

Sisters for Change brings prisoners, staff and Red Cross together to find ways to improve wellbeing in the prison community.

It's one of four Red Cross pilot programs run in Australian prisons. People in prison are encouraged and supported to become active participants in leading on issues affecting their

prison community, and are offered training and mentoring.

"It is with their amazing and continued support that I have endured a sense of belonging and self-worth, as well as the knowledge and understanding to overcome the things I cannot change."

They train to become Special Status Red Cross volunteers, receiving formal qualifications in Basic First Aid and Mental Health First Aid, Cultural Competency and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The projects they lead are many and varied. There's the clean-up crew, where volunteers hold working bees to improve hygiene, Safe Women Workshops to talk about safety and solutions to violence and mental health training – among so many others.



“The seemingly small solutions that we’ve come up with can have a really big impact in that context. I guess it’s making an impact with the most vulnerable who have the least access in an institution that has the most power.” Rachel, Team Leader Community Justice and Partnerships.

A fresh start

Nationally, over the last 10 years there has been a 40% increase in women being imprisoned. Many are survivors of domestic violence, experiencing poverty, and are dealing with mental health issues.

Many, like Kellie, are also mothers. By supporting them with training, equipping them with skills and encouraging them with self-belief, they’re empowered to create better lives for themselves, their children and their communities.

Getting to lead projects like the *Mum’s in Jail* book is just the start of their journey to a brighter future.

In just 12 months, 75% of those that took part in the program said they felt like a different person from who they were when they came into prison.

“For the first time I think some of the prison officers actually see those prisoners doing something to better somebody else...So it really changed the way some of the officers looked at the women. That they could actually go down and clean a filthy unit so that another woman going through crisis will have some comfort.” Glenda Duffy, Cultural Liaison Officer, and Kalkadoon Waayni woman from Mount Isa and Gulf of Carpentaria.

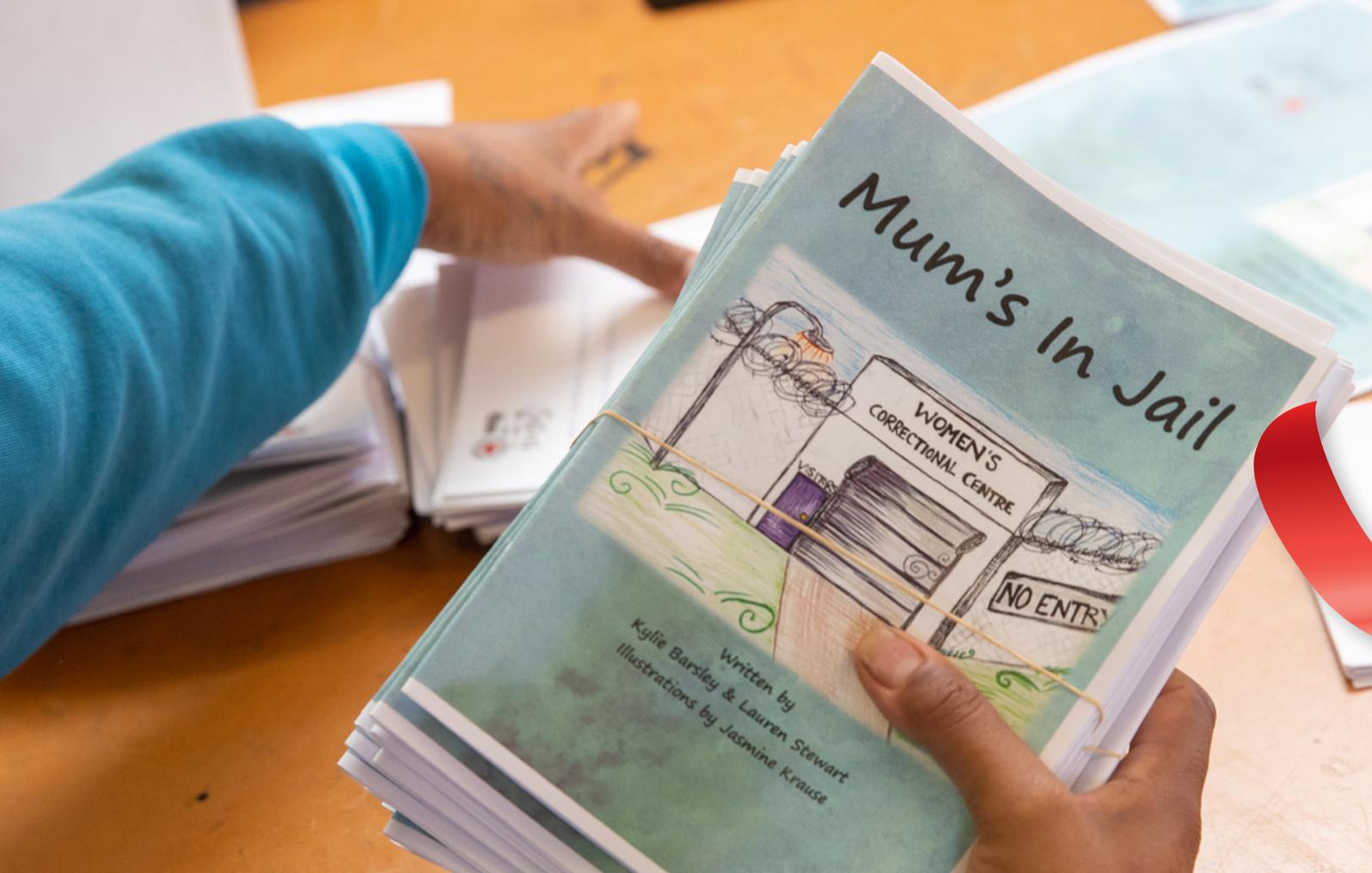
The power of connection to Country and culture

Almost 70% of the women in the prison are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. They’ve expressed that staying connected to Country and culture is important – it helps them feel safer, and more supported when they return home.

Glenda brings in Elders from the community to support the women with connection to Country and cultural safety.

They’ve also become their cheer squad on what is a difficult, but life-changing path to breaking a cycle of insecurity and disadvantage.

“I think them having connection with the Elders gives them a sense of belonging, a sense of, ‘...well, when I get out, I’m going to



have that support at my community'. Why can't we heal them in there before they come out, you know?"

Changing hearts and minds

There are many ways to measure the success of Sisters for Change: the prison is now cleaner, nurses are having more open and honest conversations with the women, and there's less conflict and better relations between prisoners and officers.

Elders like Aunty Dorothy measure success in hugs.

"By the end of our sessions we had the non-Indigenous women asking 'Can we give you a hug?'. How powerful is that? And that's our way of recognising, you know when you evaluate things, that's how we evaluate, through those little actions."

Kellie measures it by how she feels now, compared to when she first arrived.

"I am able to serve my role as a Sister for Change with pride. I have gained the upmost respect from my fellow peers for the support I am able to give them."

She and the other Sisters for Change are giving all women in the prison the opportunity to grow, develop important skills, and make positive plans that will help them flourish once their term is served.

This is the power of kindness. It can ripple far and wide, empowering strong women to thrive, and making communities healthier and safer.

*Names changed to protect privacy.

\$8,000 can...

help recruit and train volunteers to work in prisons and youth justice centres.

\$20,000 can...

help four young people impacted by the justice system turn their lives around with a three-month support program.

\$40,000 can...

support 8 community-run projects to strengthen culture and connection to country.

Sisters for Change In the first 12 months...



53 sessions were delivered



24 women graduated as volunteers



12 volunteer-led community projects were set up



362 volunteer hours were contributed

The Projects

SAFE WOMEN WORKSHOPS: These workshops address solutions to violence and assault within prison, and are delivered weekly by women already in the correctional centre to those just arriving. Since starting, conflict and assaults have decreased, and women and staff both report a safer prison community.

CLEAN UP CREW: Volunteers carry out working bees to improve the hygiene of the prison, helping to improve the health and wellbeing of the women staying there.

IMPROVING CULTURAL SAFETY: Around 70% of the women in Townsville Women's Correctional Centre are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This project helps to make the

prison more culturally safe, especially around grieving and counselling.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING:

This is a formal qualification volunteers earn, and lifts the capacity of the whole prison community to respond proactively to people experiencing a decline in mental health. It also promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and approaches to emotional wellbeing.

ELDERS FOR CHANGE: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders from the community are invited into the prison for cultural continuity, storytelling, to support grief and loss and to connect all the women to caring figures.

PARENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS PROJECT:

This group created a resource kit for mums who are in prison for the first time. It includes information on organising visits, playgroup, instructions on how to use the phone, the guidelines around mail and photos, and tips on what to tell their kids. The kit also includes a card and envelope so women can immediately write to their children and families.

MUM'S IN JAIL: A book written by women in prison for parents to give to their children to make prison less frightening. It helps to explain to children in simple terms what day to day life is like for their mum inside.



Finding friendship in a new home

A simple birthday celebration started an unlikely but incredible friendship between Laurine, a young Syrian refugee and Jan, a grandmother and President of a small Red Cross branch.

Laurine and her family came to the regional town of Harvey in Western Australia in early 2019.

Having escaped the horrors of the Syrian war and years of living in poverty in Lebanon, they secured a humanitarian visa as part of a program connecting skilled refugees with employers in regional Australia.

When they arrived they had nothing. They knew no one, could barely speak the language and were trying to start a new life in a strange country, separated from their family and friends.

Jan, who had moved to Harvey 62 years earlier as a young bride, knew what it was like to leave a life behind, and to arrive somewhere completely unknown.

So, one short week after the family landed, Jan sought them out.

“Because I was the President of the Red Cross here, we were asked could we help this family. We all met in a coffee shop and Laurine was pretty quiet at that time, she was a bit shy. But then it was her daughter Amira’s fourth

birthday, so we took them out, made a birthday cake, and bought little gifts. That’s how we got going,” says Jan.

A grandmother gained

It wasn’t long before the two became close friends. As Laurine navigated her way through her new life here in Australia, Jan was often at her side. The pair would meet up at the local coffee shop to chat. Whenever Laurine had a question she would text Jan to seek her advice.

As time went by, Jan helped Amira get into dance classes at the local school. Every Wednesday she would take them to ‘Story time’ at the library, and on Fridays they would all head to the recreational centre.

When Laurine started studying English at TAFE, Jan looked after Amira, picking her up and dropping her off from school. When Laurine gave birth to a second baby girl, Jan was again there to help.

“When I arrived here I worry about how can I start my life. But since I met Jan life is very easy. But no Jan, there’s no life here,” says Laurine.

And it's not just Laurine and Jan who are close, Amira has come to see Jan as family.

"My older daughter says 'Jan's not my friend, she's my grandmother'. She has a very good relationship with her. It's very beautiful," says Laurine.

And Jan takes great joy in having what she sees as an extended family.

"I'm like a Mum to Laurine, and the little girl, she's so lovely, she always gives me a hug – because all my grandkids have grown up you don't get that stuff off them anymore. So now I've got this little one and she's really a dear little thing," says Jan.

What it means to find safety and comfort

Helping refugee families like Laurine's settle into their new lives here in Australia is just one of the many ways Red Cross works to support newly arrived migrants.

From helping people seeking asylum make ends meet, to reconnecting families separated by war, disaster and migration – Red Cross is committed to supporting refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants who find themselves in vulnerable situations.

Today, Laurine's dreams are big. After she graduates from her English course she wants to go to university to study dentistry, her husband Ali also wants to go back to university to finish his computer engineering degree.

Eighteen months into their new life and Laurine and her family are thriving.

"Because she's with me and everybody knows me they really have accepted her very well. They all speak to her when she goes up the street. They're very happy with what Red Cross has helped them with. They can't believe what Australia does for people," says Jan.

Jan's kindness not only helped Laurine's family build a new life in safety, it inspired Laurine to become a Red Cross volunteer herself, to give back to the very community who welcomed her, just like Jan.

That's the power of kindness. It creates connections and community, even in the most unlikely of places.



\$15,500 can...

prevent 10 families with no income or work rights from having to sleep in the street.

\$24,000 can...

support 20 families without any income or support for 6 weeks to put food on the table and pay for essential items.

\$60,000 can...

support 30 families with complex needs, through a skilled case worker.

This year, your support enabled...



4,000 refugees to settle safely in Australia, of whom 40% are children



1,000 in-depth interviews with people in immigration detention, to monitor their safety, health and wellbeing



188 people from **33** different nationalities who were trafficked, forced into marriage or labour exploitation to be supported



We recover better together

When Tropical Cyclone Harold tore through Vanuatu in April, it left a trail of destruction and many people with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

If that wasn't enough to deal with, the country was also grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic.

In many parts of the country, it's estimated more than 70% of the houses were partially damaged or completely destroyed, affecting almost 130,000 people.

In a time when people were supposed to be staying home, most were left without one.

Tropical Cyclone Harold was the strongest cyclone to hit the Pacific in years, also passing through the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga.

It caused widespread destruction everywhere it went. On the island of Pentecost, Vanuatu, the situation was dire. **90% of houses, evacuation centres, crops, water, health and classroom facilities were completely destroyed.**

The rivers were overflowing, causing major roadblocks. Buildings flattened, power cut, even the cyclone-adapted coconut trees were strewn around like twigs. And hundreds of people on the small northern island had suffered serious injuries.

Kindness matters

In the midst of all of this, Red Cross volunteer Larissa took the time to help a distressed older man put his shoes on.

It was exactly four weeks after the cyclone hit, and like hundreds of others affected he was making his way to a distribution point to collect much needed emergency supplies, when Larissa noticed him struggling.

"I ran to lend him a hand, give him a little support and I helped to put his slippers on correctly so that he can walk up to the distribution point."

It was a small act of kindness that would be easy to miss amongst the rush of a large-scale disaster response.

But it's the exact kind of act that can make the biggest difference to someone going through a tough time.

"That moment, it is like when you realise that the little gesture you give to someone in need, you feel that you did something good to somebody."

\$8,500 can...

provide 100 Epidemic Control Toolkits, to help Pacific communities stay safe and healthy by preventing, detecting and responding to outbreaks of diseases like measles and dengue.

\$25,500 can...

provide 100 essential relief packs, with mosquito nets, jerry cans, buckets, hygiene kit, kitchen set, blankets, shelter tool kit and tarpaulins to give families a new start after a disaster.

\$40,000 can...

train 50 emergency workers in the Pacific in epidemic control.

When you've lost everything it's not just the practical support that makes a difference. It's the comfort and compassion offered by someone like Larissa that lets you know that you're not alone.

Resilient and prepared communities

Hundreds of Red Cross staff and volunteers were there to help when Tropical Cyclone Harold hit, aiding their communities, friends, families and neighbours to prepare, survive and start the journey to recovery.

Many of the areas impacted in Vanuatu are remote and hard to reach, made even more so after the destruction of the cyclone.

Volunteers made sure relief got to everywhere it was needed, spending days walking long distances, carrying heavy supplies to villages.

Some even walking along cliffs, pummelled by rain to make sure families got their emergency shelter. They slept wherever they could find space and ate in the rare moments they had a break.

Vanuatu Red Cross teams conducted damage assessments and provided psychological first-aid to those who had experienced trauma.

They also distributed health and hygiene messages to communities on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as well as to help stop the spread of water borne diseases. These

measures help make communities safer, more resilient and help them recover faster.

They did this all while dealing with the country's COVID-19 lockdown measures that made getting aid to where it was needed most even harder.

Just a few years ago, a Category 5 cyclone in the middle of a global pandemic would have been a major humanitarian catastrophe in the Pacific, with the potential for a significant loss of life.

Strengthened by a partnership with Australian Red Cross, local Red Cross teams in Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Islands are able to train and equip their emergency response teams to be first responders when disaster strikes.

Because of your support, local emergency response teams and volunteers are now better prepared to respond to disasters. Many communities in the cyclone's path were evacuated to safety and relief and aid was quick to arrive.

This is the power of your kindness. It helps our neighbours in times of disaster.



35,000 people impacted by Tropical Cyclone Harold were provided humanitarian assistance by the volunteer teams of Fiji and Vanuatu Red Cross Societies

Thank you.

Our supporter family is a vital part of the world's largest humanitarian organisation. Your kindness is helping to improve the lives of people experiencing tough times in Australia and around the world.

