

westside christian church

Flood Report



Goodna CBD
there were reports of Bull
sharks swimming through
St Ives shopping centre

Introduction

By the time you receive this report it will have been 500 days since the floods that struck South East Queensland on the 12th January 2011. Our community of Goodna was severely affected by those floods with over 600 homes being destroyed. Since then many community and church agencies have put countless hours into helping flood victims. Some of them received insurance payouts, others were denied, while most had to wait for months to get hydrology reports.

The Premier's Disaster Relief Fund raised \$252 Million, which was distributed to flood victims in three rounds:

- 1) \$2,000/adult + \$1,000/child
- 2) Up to \$100,000 for families whose homes were destroyed
- 3) Up to \$80,000 for families whose homes were damaged.



600 homes
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the floods
in Goodna



Clean up was hard work

Westside's Response

Many of our members at Westside and other Reformed Churches across South East Queensland volunteered to help clean up in the week following the floods. Ps Josh volunteered with Chaplaincy Australia 1 day/week to knock on people's doors, just to talk, to refer people onto to available help, and to pray with flood victims.

When we heard that World Development and Relief was going to hold an appeal for the Flood Disaster, we decided to apply for those funds to help those in need in our local community. We sent the application in on the 7th February and put together our Flood Relief Plan the following week. WD&R accepted our proposal and began forwarding funds.

Your Response

During the next six months we received approximately \$110,000, which we began to administer in various projects. \$70,000 came from WD&R, \$25,000 directly from CRCA churches and \$15,000 from other sources. We were amazed at people's generosity. In fact, later we realised just how difficult it was for us to manage such a large amount of money, and we decided not to accept a further \$30,000 from WD&R.



Flood Relief Projects

Through Ps Josh's contact with flood victims through Chaplaincy Australia, and Westlife Church's, Community Care Coordinator, Cathy Beauchamp, we developed a list of people to help.



The Owen Family

Family 1: The Owen's

We provided accommodation (caravan) and support for this family for more than 6 months. You may have seen this family on the television show 'The Block' which completely rebuilt their house late last year. \$3,750

Family 2: The Smith's

This young family was connected to a family in the Toowoomba congregation. We purchased them a water tank and pump so they could move into a new home. \$2,300

Family 3: Sol Lloyd

This lady was visiting family in the Philippines when the floods hit and she returned to find her house stripped bare and all her belongings gone. We provided a caravan for her and helped her rebuild her entire home, including new fences and outdoor area. \$26,000



Prime Minister Julia Gillard inspecting one of our caravans.



The Main family home. The water went nearly 3 metres over the roof

Family 4: The Main's

This was the first family we began helping. We helped them rebuild their entire second storey with the generous help of a builder from the Redlands congregation. \$3,600

Family 5: B. Willis

We came into contact with this man through the Tivoli congregation, and were able to purchase plasterboard for his home. \$1,100

Family 6: The Wong's

This family hung signs up on their home asking for people to help, and we were able to help repaint their home. \$1,100

Family 7: The Nguyen's

This family were neighbours of S. Lloyd and we were able to replaster and fit out their home. \$3,400

Family 8: The Briffa's

This family had connections with 2 families in our congregation, and while they didn't live in our suburb they were in a unique situation. We helped replace a wheelchair lift. \$12,600



Many homes had to be stripped back to bear stud work.

Family 9: J. LeDuc

This guy didn't know the floods were coming and spent the night standing on his roof knee deep in water. We were able to provide him with accommodation and purchase plasterboard for his house. \$1,800

Family 10: The Milanof's

We provided this elderly couple with plasterboard and helped replaster their home. \$5,000

Family 11: The Stephan's

This family we were able to help replaster and fit out their home. \$6,300

Family 12: The Quinlan's

We helped replace this family's furniture, including their lawn-mower. \$3,500

Project 13: Flood Money



Frank was one of the people who received \$100 worth of Flood Money

On Sunday 9th October we held a community celebration event in one of the local parks in Goodna. Besides free food, free show bags, and free entertainment, we also launched our flood money vouchers. We created vouchers that could be redeemed at four local flood affected businesses. We handed out \$100 worth of vouchers to 28 families in the first round and we handed out another round to 20 families just before Christmas. \$5,900

Project 14: Flood Donations

In April 2012 we handed out 10 \$1000 donations to local flood affected businesses. Of these 1 declined because they had just decided to close shop and walk away. The other businesses were really touched as they had received little or no financial assistance and were doing it really tough. \$9,000



Three of the businesses who received flood donations: PK Computers, Thrifty Link Hardware, St Ives Bakery.

To date we have used approximately \$87,000 of the \$110,000 we received. We are still exploring some opportunities to use the remaining \$23,000 to help flood victims.

Conclusion

Providing flood relief has been both challenging and exciting.

It has given us a great opportunity to connect with people in our local community. We now have a list of over 60 people in our local community that we have been able to help in practical and meaningful ways. Many of these people Ps Josh has been able to pray with, some he has had the opportunity to share the Gospel, and some have even visited our church.

Probably the greatest impact is how this opportunity has changed our community's impression of not just our church, but the Church in general. People who were once ambivalent, or even hostile, towards the church, now know that those who follow Jesus care about them and their needs.

However, it has also been a huge challenge for us as a congregation. Dealing with families who have been through such a traumatic experience requires pastoral sensitivity. It is not easy to assess people's needs and it takes many hours of listening.

We also found it challenging not just giving people money, but developing on-going relationships with these people, and providing our congregation members with opportunities to serve those in need. We organized a number of working bees to help people clean up their homes, to replaster homes, and repaint them.

It has been a huge effort, but we have been immensely grateful that we have been given this opportunity to reach out to our community with the love of Christ. We would like to thank all those who have been so generous and allowed us to administer these funds to help flood victims in Goodna. We send you this report with the blessings of WD&R.

Westside Christian Church Council