



Australian school students urged to pitch in for child victims of Burma cyclone

SCHOOLS across Australia are being called on to rally together and immediately respond to the emergency situation in Burma following the devastating cyclone at the weekend, by School Aid, an Australian non-profit organisation.

Cyclone Nargis has claimed more than 4000 lives, and another 3000 are missing. But many fear a humanitarian crisis is imminent. The death toll is expected to rise to tens of thousands, with the impact on children likely to be enormous.

United Nations officials say hundreds of thousands of people are without shelter or drinking water.

School Aid's new website (www.schoolaid.org.au) allows Australian school students to directly respond to emergencies, to support the children who are often the worst hit and most vulnerable - with families, homes, schools and communities torn apart.

Through the website, School Aid coordinates the support of students from right across Australia's 11,000 schools. It builds on School Aid's past achievements in enabling Australian school students to help children in need around the world, particularly where their education and learning has been impacted.

"Since School Aid was launched in 2002, we've seen first hand the incredible spirit in which schools from all sectors right across Australia come together in support and solidarity for their peers affected by tragedy, in Australia and overseas", says School Aid CEO Julie Urquhart.

To date, over a thousand schools from all education sectors have participated in School Aid appeals, collectively raising \$1.5 million in response to tragic events around the world such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Beslan School Massacre and Cyclone Larry.

The website offers students the information, tools and resources they need to take action in response to crises like that of Burma.

"And, given School Aid's track record of working with highly respected non-government organisations to deliver funds on the ground, schools can be confident that funds raised will directly help kids impacted by this tragedy", she said.

Ms Urquhart says School Aid is equipping a new generation of Australian children to understand the value of charitable giving.

"Through its online community, School Aid is building a national network of schools supporting student-led giving, and helping to build a generation of compassionate and aware individuals", she says.

School Aid will be informing all schools around Australia of the Burma Appeal and encouraging them to register on the website and allow their students to respond.

Further information: CEO Julie Urquhart (0403 794 756) or www.schoolaid.org.au

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