

Talking Points

FIGHTING POVERTY IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND BEYOND

Thank you for supporting our local Christian Partners by participating in our Christmas Appeal. Your support helps fund life changing work where it's needed most, in 57 projects, across 20 countries. As this Christmas we are featuring our work in the Solomon Islands, here are a few notes you can share with your congregation about what our Partner's program does to help in that part of the world.

The Challenges:

- Around 25 per cent of the population of the Solomon Islands live in poverty. Of these families, about 80 per cent live in remote areas.
- Around 16 per cent of the population are undernourished due to food insecurity.
- Babies in the Solomon Islands are five times more likely to die than those born in Australia. (The under 5 mortality rate is around 2 per cent.)
- Poor access to clean water and sanitation contribute to high levels of diarrheal disease. Many homes do not have toilets.
- Malaria is a serious problem. A lack of resources in rubbish management leads to rubbish pits, creating breeding pools for mosquitos.
- Women and children are especially vulnerable to disease, injury and abuse.

How Our Partners Are Helping:

- Our local Partner in the Solomon Islands is a group of churches, committed to helping local communities create safer spaces where everyone can flourish.
- Nathaniel pastors a church, and also works as a volunteer facilitating our Partner's program in local communities. He's featured in our photos and communications throughout the Christmas Appeal.
- The program is unique in the Solomons and is heavily reliant on communities working together to drive change themselves – requiring milestones to be reached along the way. Communities take ownership of, and pride in, the transformation taking place. This makes it effective, sustainable and in stark contrast to passive attitudes towards external aid and development that were once common in the region.
- The program helps communities renew and reclaim water resources by cleaning up the environment with initiatives like turning rubbish pits into landfill and seawalls. This is doubly beneficial in coastal communities where climate change is causing sea levels to rise.

- Our local Partners aim to install a flushing toilet in every home. This also helps keep the waterways and local environment clean.
- The program helps equip households with better cooking set ups, and training and equipment to make eating and cleaning up safer.
- Sickness and injury are minimised in participating communities. And, in some cases, Malaria has been eradicated.
- We're asking people to support local Christians like Nathaniel who are stepping up for their community, so that all their neighbours can live in fullness of life.

About our local Christian Partner

- Our local Partner is an indigenous protestant church denomination, started with support from the Australian Baptist Church – about 20 per cent of Solomon Islanders are members.
- We've worked with them since the 2007 tsunami.
- They serve in 600+ communities.
- They are part of the Asia Pacific Baptist Fellowship (APBF).
- The development program we support in the Solomon Islands was co-designed with local Christian leaders to work alongside their church goals: 'Growing a mature church, to impact the nation, to touch the world.'