



Responding to the events of 2020

## Communities

In 2020, the QBE Foundation took an active and coordinated approach to supporting our partners and communities around the globe. The not-for-profit and community sector was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and we worked with our charity partners to assist them in dealing with increased demand for their services while helping to offset a decrease in donations and funding due to the economic impact of COVID-19. Over \$1.5 million of QBE Foundation funding was either redirected or provided in addition to our standing partnership commitments.

As the pandemic first surged, we paused reporting requirements and waived restrictions on using funding for capital and operational expenses. QBE supported vital initiatives in Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, North America, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. We will continue to work with our local charity partners to support them in developing and adapting their operations in this difficult environment.

Globally, our disaster relief and resilience partnership with Red Cross and Save the Children has enabled us to reach and support more vulnerable communities than ever before. The partnership is built

around rapid mobilisation of funding, allowing our humanitarian partners more flexibility to respond to disasters as and where they arise. The partnership also allows us to focus on building resilience in, and the long-term recovery of, communities. Our partnership has enabled QBE to assist in the global response to some of the largest catastrophes of 2020.

### **Australian Black Summer bushfires**

The Black Summer bushfires showed just how devastating the impact of climate change on our environment can be. Dozens of lives and thousands of homes were lost, with whole

communities destroyed. QBE was able to rapidly deploy aid through our partnership with Red Cross and Save the Children. We expanded beyond our financial commitment through additional donations, including matching employee fundraising, and training a team of our employees to assist in evacuation centres. Our support contributed to the implementation of recovery plans, the delivery of relief to evacuation centres and the provision of outreach support.

We worked on several initiatives with Red Cross to aid in their recovery effort. Our Claims team assisted in facilitating effective delivery of grants to impacted communities while screening for possible fraud.

Along with other companies, we made material donations to deliver financial and practical assistance to those in need. Funding was dispersed among communities in the form of emergency grants, urgent home repairs, re-establishment of homes, supporting people hospitalised for injuries and providing financial hardship relief.

Our support for Save the Children, alongside other donors, enabled them to plan and deliver their two-phase bushfire plan, 'Response and Recovery'. The Response phase implemented nine child-friendly spaces in evacuation and recovery centres which helped support 782 children; giving them the space to draw, play and socialise. The spaces also helped them to process their experiences in a safe environment while parents began the critical journey of recovery. The Recovery Phase, still in progress around the country, includes outreach activities and delivering the [Journey of Hope in-school program](#) to assist children in processing and expressing trauma and their feelings.

### COVID-19 community impact

COVID-19 has had a profound impact on people worldwide, but especially those already experiencing vulnerability. We mobilised our disaster relief and resilience partnership to strengthen the ability of Red Cross and Save the Children to respond to the ongoing crisis. QBE is proud to support our partners in delivering programs that focus on providing financial assistance, healthcare, pre-stocking of relief aid in high risk areas and proactive communications within communities.

Our support has also contributed to Save the Children's launch of the 'By Your Side' program in Spain, helping to safeguard the education and wellbeing of children and their families most affected by the pandemic. So far, 2,290 families, which includes 3,840 children have been supported with cash vouchers, distribution of technological devices and Wi-Fi cards ensuring marginalised families have access to digital education and information.

In Australia, the QBE Foundation supported Red Cross' 'Double Impact Campaign', where we matched donations to their COVID-19 response up to a total of A\$100,000. Many communities were already scarred by the impact of drought and fire. The campaign aimed to raise awareness of this additional pandemic impact and raise much-needed funding to support the ongoing work of Red Cross in their response. Our donation enabled them to adapt their door-to-door and community-based support work to phone and online channels to ensure all Australians were supported.



Image by Pedro Armestre

### Supporting North American communities

Communities in the United States have experienced hurricanes, wildfires and a derecho (tornado) across the Midwest, all during the pandemic. QBE supported the American Red Cross as they responded to these disasters through relief funds and matching employee donations. Our support has gone toward providing impacted communities with vital supplies including clean water, safe shelter and hot meals.

### Cyclone Harold

Cyclone Harold devastated communities across the Pacific Islands. Along with contributing funding towards delivering hygiene and shelter packs to families in Vanuatu and Fiji, QBE support is enabling Save the Children to establish the first ever cash transfer program in Papua New Guinea, enabling the most vulnerable to access money for food, water and health supplies using their mobile phone. A cashless transfer minimises people having to physically queue for aid, also providing some protection for women against the risk of violence or theft. Cash Transfers enable quick and safe access to financial aid post-disaster, including remote regions where aid can often be significantly delayed.

### Disaster support in Vietnam and the Philippines

The world's strongest typhoon in 2020, Typhoon Goni, created havoc across the Philippines. The resulting wind, rainfall and flooding left many communities with no electricity, contaminated water and severe building damage. QBE supported Save the Children to help provide people with water kits and essential hygiene supplies, including face masks and sanitiser.

We also activated the disaster relief fund to support the Viet Nam Red Cross Society Emergency Appeal in response to the October 2020 floods. The funding will contribute to the delivery of assistance and support for the immediate and early recovery needs of 160,000 people for 12 months. The operation will focus on shelter, livelihoods, health, hygiene, disaster risk reduction, community engagement and accountability as well as protection and inclusion.



QBE and our Global Disaster Relief and Resilience partners Red Cross and Save the Children were shortlisted for the Shared Value Awards for *Collaboration of the Year*.