John Elferink  
Minister for Health  

Territorians en route to disaster zone in Vanuatu  

17 March 2015  

Thirteen Territorians will tomorrow morning be deployed to Vanuatu to assist in disaster recovery efforts, joining the seven which have been on the ground since Sunday.

A group of 20 Territorians and Victorians will form Team Alpha as part of the Australian Medical Assistance Team traveling from Darwin to Vanuatu’s capital, Port Vila, following the destruction caused by Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Team Alpha will offer urgent medical and logistical support to authorities and help to establish a temporary ward at the hospital.

The team will work at the existing hospital and work with local staff to provide general practice and emergency care.

Minister for Health John Elferink said the Darwin-based National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre team has been at the forefront of dealing with the recovery in Vanuatu.

“The Northern Territory’s close proximity to our Asian neighbours means we are well placed to respond to such incidents,” Mr Elferink said.

“As more information flows back to Australia about the situation in Vanuatu, we are gaining a better idea of the response required.

“Selected Northern Territory Government employees are on standby to travel to the location should their assistance be needed.

“If greater assistance is required, staff would join the existing 27 Australian Medical Assistance Team members in Vanuatu which includes a team leader, doctors, nurses, paramedics, a radiologist, a pharmacist, logisticians, and an initial assessment team.”

Mr Elferink said he is proud of those Territorians who have left their families and friends behind to help out a country in need.

“Almost a month ago, the Northern Territory faced its own tropical cyclone, Cyclone Lam,” Mr Elferink said.
“While recovery efforts continue in the Territory’s Top End, we are taking the additional task of providing assistance to our South Pacific neighbours in our stride.”

The Victorian personnel have also received training from the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre either in Darwin or in their home jurisdiction.

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