



MEDIA RELEASE

**FIJI FLOODS: ADDITIONAL AUSTRALIAN FUNDING
ASSISTANCE WELCOMED, BUT MORE WILL BE
REQUIRED**

The President of the Australia Fiji Business Council, Mr Brian Anderson, today welcomed the announcement by the Australian Government on Friday 16 January of an increase in financial assistance available to assist the flood victims in Fiji.

Mr Anderson said “the increase in funding represents an important step forward by the Australian government in acknowledging the scale of the catastrophe in Fiji, but there will be a need for greater assistance than just AUD3 million”.

There is a very immediate need for the Australian and Fiji governments to set aside their political differences and move quickly to provide assistance on the ground with surveying the damage and providing logistical assistance for people in urban, rural and remote areas.

“Australia has assets which the Fiji government does not have to enable an operation to swing into action immediately to ameliorate the suffering of the people of Fiji including in difficult to access areas of the country”, Mr Anderson said.

The Fiji government has identified an urgent need for clean water, water tanks, water purification tablets, clothing, blankets, bedding and tents.

Mr Anderson said “The distribution of emergency relief to many affected parts of Fiji will require transport and logistics assistance which Australia can provide to supplement Fiji’s own limited capacity”.

Mr Anderson said the Council has written to the Australian and Fiji Prime Ministers urging them to set aside their political differences and to act urgently in partnership to ensure the quick and effective distribution of the emergency supplies requested, or otherwise risk the possibility that disease and starvation will quickly increase the scale of this already catastrophic event.

BRISBANE
19 January 2009