

## **FIJI UPLIFT DISTRIBUTION REPORT 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**

This latest distribution was our shortest as it was done in a period of only 9 days. Fitting out 4 bras each to just over 7,000 women equating to just over 28,000 bras to 5 distribution centres around Viti Levu. We were hoping to have this distribution done from December 2014 but due to the difficulty in raising the \$2,469 for the Sydney freight, it was delayed by two months and finally arriving in Suva in February 2015. Nevertheless it was made possible with the countless volunteers and donors and sponsors in Australia, Fiji and as far as Saudi Arabia. Our biggest and endless gratitude as always is reserved to the countless donors here in NSW, ACT and Victoria, the tireless Uplift Project volunteers in Melbourne, ACT and NSW. The freight companies, Gibson in Melbourne and C.T. Freight in Sydney. Our Fiji contact, Ms Tulia Takala for patiently working with Fiji Customs in releasing all the cargoes and all our Cargo handlers and bra fitters who also worked tirelessly and with a smile permanently fixed on their faces for the 9 days of distributions.

A total of 36 ladies received 2 prosthetic breasts each (72 total) and four of its special bras during the 9 days distributions.

This distribution, was fitted mainly from the February Sydney freight via donations received at our Ruse Garage together with the drop off point of NSW Uplift Coordinator, Anna's home. A reserve of around 5,000 bras were left over from the October 2014 distribution that was already in Suva and mainly from the Intimo collection. After this recent distribution of just over 28,000 bras, we had nearly used up the sizes 18 and over. The 5 distribution centres fitted were mainly big sized ladies!

A total of \$A3,100 was the cost of sending our freight from Sydney to our doorstep in Suva. We were able to pay for this upfront and with the sale of 500 bras at \$5 each to friends and families working in Suva and the sale of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand clothes and shoes we were able to recoup our freight costs. Our aim is to one day fully recover these costs from the sale of used clothes only or even company sponsors.

Our next distribution is earmarked for the month of June 2015.

Some quotes heard and received from forever grateful recipients of Uplift Project:

*One of the distribution centre visited was the Loloma Home Care Centre. Nestled in the interiors of the Sleeping giants of Sabeto, approximately 20 km's out of Nadi Town, is the Fiji Loloma Orphanage. A refuge for desperate mothers and their children, Loloma Home also cares for orphans, the homeless and the elderly. This visit was a first of a kind for most of our Uplift crew and had nearly everyone of the group in tears, tears of compassion and tears of gratitude. The tears from our recipients were of joy and thankfulness. We left them a bagful of bras (about 300) to help the mothers with a bit of income for their needs. We also left them a bagful of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand clothes for the women and children, and about 30 single bed sheets. This was greatly appreciated by the residents.*

From Pase Whiting of Viseisei Village:

*Uplift Project is just so loved and blessings are coming your way and that is from the heart of all the ladies who experienced this generosity! A lady just wanted to sing the chorus, "There's never been a day like this day"! Thank you so much for the generosity. Thank you for allowing me to take bras to our sick ladies who were not well to attend. I was like Santa Claus with my plastic bags of bras to these women ...you would not believe the looks on their faces. My aunt from the village who is now a widow, came running lifting her dress up with her new bra saying whoooooaaaeeeeeeee I only wish your uncle was alive today... kissing me and saying ... he's never seen me in a beautiful bra like this.*

From Vani Veikoso on the ladies from Naselai:

*Thank you so much for the greatest gifts to our ladies today. They are so very thankful and grateful. From my aunties... "These 2<sup>nd</sup> hand bras are sold for \$18 and upwards here in the shop, like seriously which one of us can afford that?"*

From Kara Matakada on the ladies of Mokani:

*For our ladies, they couldn't believe their eyes. Even their husbands couldn't afford to buy a bra for them. They only have a bra for church and going out, otherwise its hang loose to the garden. They are so grateful for the wonderful gift and the women from Mokani says that "It's Manna from heaven".*

From Josi on Bau Island:

*Josi said the last bra she got was before her daughter was born and that's the only outing bra she has had until the bra project. Her daughter is now a Class 6 student so that's one good bra for the last 10 years until Uplift.*

#### Our Distribution in a Nutshell!

Each distribution requires a minimum of 4 cargo handlers and 12 fitters. Each distribution centre requires transportation of a hired 3 tonne truck and a hired 12 seater mini bus for our fitters. The distribution centre is picked according to requests that are received from mainly someone that is originally from that area. Once contact is made then we worked with them for organising our 3 tonne truck and refreshments for the Uplift crew. If travel time is outside of 2 hours then we ask the contact if refreshments can be provided upon arrival at 7am before setting up for 8am start. Morning tea break is around 10am and then lunch at 1pm, afternoon tea break at 3pm and then fitting until the last lady is done, which is normally around 4pm and in some cases if there are over 2000 ladies then they would finish around 7pm. We normally get an estimate of how many ladies are expected. If it's around 1000 ladies then we pack 1000 of each sizes. This way we are guaranteed that we won't turn any one girl/woman away for a lack of size. We now have 3 nurses on our fitting crew and they talk to the breastfeeding mothers especially on the importance of alternating their breasts whilst feeding their babies. We had witnessed a lot of one sided breasts due to the misconception that the other breast is empty so it's not being given to the baby at all.