

*The ongoing lack of water could lead to increased illness in children, malnutrition and possibly population displacement*



Photo courtesy of frankandpeggyphotography.com

*For those involved with the recovery mission, the reward is seeing the smiles on the islanders' faces when they receive a delivery of water*



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in this case, was initially refused by the Red Cross and UN. In some cases there has been good news, with the teams finding new or defunct old water springs through the use of new technology and old village stories. In one village, the team found an old water line to a spring and carried new water line to the site. They replaced and buried the new water line and were able to access around 3000 litres per day. As they completed this task, a

local remembered that there had been another spring around the other side of the hill that had been used around 50 years ago. A search aided by the use of GPS technology on both location and elevation through the jungle eventually yielded an old spring and silted-up pond area about 500 m away. This was immediately shovelled out and produced good water. Wita Aid fitted a new water line which was joined to the other new pipe, taking the daily water resource to 7500 litres and sup-

plying villages up to 1.6 km away. I had figured that Sam and Jess Bell were not in this for the money, but the ongoing hours and energy are incredibly demanding, and the costs of purchasing and maintaining barges, gensets and desalinators are significant. I asked Sam what the rewards were and his response was fitting: "The reward is in the smile on the face of a child or adult who you have just brought water to, and you know how happy they are to be in their own home."

It was suggested that a group of corporates and individuals with logistics expertise, both physical and e-based, could be organised to respond to certain disasters to provide additional humanitarian logistics and supply chain support, such as the catastrophe that has befallen the Shepherd Islanders.

These are not people who pollute the planet, or create mayhem, or demand anything significant; they are quietly grateful for enough water to survive on. But they need help now – and the discussions in October suggested that there would be a lot of quiet satisfaction and collective reward in assisting such groups at all logistics levels.

Whether it be the donation of shipping space, project management skills, engineering expertise, roofing and building materials, desalinators, PV systems or other services, it would immediately reduce the problems of those in need.

Humanitarian aid is the biggest non-regulated industry in the world, and its role is going to grow. Its performance is collectively reported as a mixed bag, and I am not in a position to comment on this, although I anticipate that where there is a lot of rumoured disarray, there will be equal inefficiency.

I guess that says it all, but we in the logistics sector are more aware than most that the action of service delivery in a situation like this is demanding, so any help – no matter how small – can stretch a long way.

**Looking to the future**

At the recent CILT NZ awards dinner in October, a number of informal discussions took place which generated some very interesting concepts around corporate and individual willingness to help regarding humanitarian logistics and active supply chain involvement in supporting regional responses. How this might evolve has yet to be determined, but it is a 'watch this space' situation. Those wishing to register an interest are welcome to contact me.

*Water pipe being carried up the jungle track*

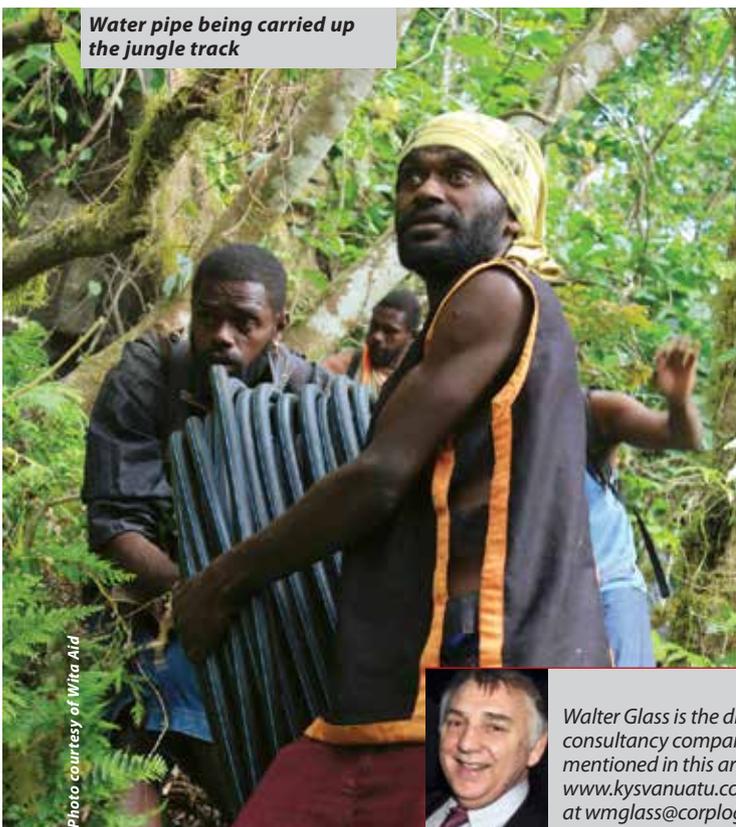


Photo courtesy of Wita Aid



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