



## **Press Release from the Funeral Directors Association of NZ**

**5 December 2019**

# **Samoa Measles Crisis**

The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand (FDANZ) has today released an update on the Samoa Measles Crisis.

“It’s terrible to see the crisis unfolding in Samoa with 60 confirmed deaths, 52 of those being children 4 and under” says FDANZ President Gary Taylor, “and our hearts go out to all those who have lost loved ones.”

FDANZ in partnership with the New Zealand Embalmers Association (NZEA) funds and operates the NZ Funeral Disaster Response Team. This team is led by Simon Manning of Harbour City Funerals who co-ordinated the funeral sector response to both the Christchurch earthquake and the mosque attacks in March this year.

Manning has made contact with funeral homes in Samoa to offer support from New Zealand. There are 2 funeral homes in Samoa with only 1 having qualified embalmers on staff. “Currently they are managing to cope but the situation is challenging.” Manning said.

In Samoa, for children they build the caskets as required or in the traditional families they are burying children in Tapa cloth. Manning has been told that there is no shortage of manpower at present to build the caskets required.

“The Samoan funeral homes will be helping families through the funeral and grieving process” Manning said “and making sure that they all have a very personal and meaningful funeral. We stand by ready to assist them if the situation worsens and they need help”.

FDANZ will provide updates on any deployment of the NZ Funeral Disaster Response Team that may be requested from Samoa.

“We have offered the support of the NZ Funeral Disaster Response Team in any way that they see fit” says Taylor, “and will continue to monitor the situation and respond to any requests. We have also offered support to the funeral home staff who are caring for grieving families.”

**ENDS**

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The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand represents funeral directing companies that undertake the majority of funerals in New Zealand. They are a group of caring professionals who are committed to ensuring that the families they serve receive high-quality funeral service. For more information, visit our website: [www.fdanz.org.nz](http://www.fdanz.org.nz)