

Nurses providing support in Fiji

TEN NURSES, seven of them NZNO members, flew to Fiji early this month as part of the New Zealand Medical Assistance Team (NZMAT) providing assistance in the wake of Cyclone Winston, which hit Fiji last month. The nurses, plus two surgeons, two anaesthetists, two emergency care clinicians, one health planner and one emergency response coordinator, are divided into two surgical and two medical teams.

The surgical teams will provide support to the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, where Fijian nurses have been working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, since the cyclone hit. One medical team will be based on the HMNZS Canterbury and will be working in the Northern Lau Group of islands, while the second will be based on Koro Island.

Announcing the deployment, the Ministry of Health's acting director of public health, Stewart Jessamine, said the number of personnel and the clinical skills of the NZMAT group made this the largest and most complex health support programme New Zealand had provided in response to an emergency in the Pacific Islands. •



Seven NZNO members, from theatre, emergency and intensive care, are part of the New Zealand Medical Assistance Team which flew to Fiji this month. Back row from left: Michelle Peperkoorn, Helen Carter, Megann Devereux and Helen Polley; front row from left: Choinneach (Mac) MacDonald, Robby Berghan and Emma Brooks.