A MESSAGE FROM RICHARD R. KELLEY TO OUR OUTRIGGER ‘OHANA

Cyclone Winston doesn’t dampen Fiji’s *Bula* spirit!

By Dr. Richard Kelley

Last Saturday, Winston, a powerful tropical cyclone, made landfall along the north coast of Fiji’s largest, most populous island, Viti Levu. Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort on the south side of Viti Levu was not evacuated. However, as a precautionary measure, we evacuated our guests from Castaway Island, about 10 miles west of Viti Levu, to accommodations on the main island to ensure their safety.

I want to first thank our Fiji operations teams for their efforts to ensure that our guests were safe and cared for and our resorts battened down for the storm. I am relieved and happy to report that all of the members of our ‘ohana and guests at Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort (FOR) and Castaway Island, Fiji (FCI), are safe.

At Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort, guests and hosts waited out the storm in sturdy buildings. Some trees, bushes and other landscape components were uprooted or blown down. However, there was little damage to any structures. General Manager Peter Hopgood and his team had nearly everything back to almost normal within 48 hours.

Castaway Island, Fiji, General Manager Steven Andrews and a crew of valiant coworkers stayed at the resort throughout the storm. Steven reports that there is some damage to the facilities, which will need to be repaired before the property will once again be ready for guests. Our target date is June 1, 2016, although it may reopen sooner if repairs can be completed more quickly.

The Fijian government declared a state of natural disaster and a nationwide curfew. Many homes, including those of some of our vuvale (family), have been badly

Cleanup efforts are well underway!

*Dr. Richard Kelley*
damaged. In keeping with The Outrigger Way, a fundraising drive is being organized to assist those of our hosts who were affected by the storm.

No strangers to Mother Nature, our hosts in Fiji quickly got working on cleanup and repair and are doing so with valiant spirit and thankful hearts.

To all our family at FCI and FOR, I cannot thank you enough for your support and assistance through this past difficult week and, I feel sure, in the weeks to come.

I understand that in addition to being the traditional welcome in Fiji, the word Bula also means “life” and is spoken with both sincerity and enthusiasm that is bigger than life itself. Thank you for your Bula spirit and from the bottom of my heart, VINAKA VAKALEVU (THANK YOU VERY MUCH).