

# Australian Baptists **Stand with Myanmar** 2023-2026



## Australian Baptists are Standing with Myanmar because



Millions of people are still in need of humanitarian assistance and basic medical care



2 to 3 million people have been displaced from their homes and communities, and more than 100 thousand refugees have fled the country



The protracted conflict in Myanmar is the world's current longest running civil war

**TOGETHER IN PRAYER, COMPASSION AND JUSTICE**

## Executive Summary

Over the past three years, Australian Baptists have stood faithfully with the people of Myanmar amid one of the gravest humanitarian and political crises in our region. Since the 2021 military coup, conflict, mass displacement and repeated natural disasters have devastated civilian life, while access to humanitarian assistance has increasingly narrowed. For Australian Baptists, this crisis has been deeply personal; more than 27,000 people from Myanmar now live in Australia, including over 10,000 people who are part of the Australian Baptist church, making the collective people groups from Myanmar in Australia the largest diaspora from any other one country.

Through the various expressions of the Stand with Myanmar campaign, churches across the country have responded with prayer, generous giving and sustained public advocacy. Together, Australian Baptists have supported humanitarian relief following major earthquakes and ongoing conflict, protected children through trauma-informed care, and helped preserve access to learning in crisis-affected communities.

At the same time, Australian Baptists have consistently raised their voices in public life by engaging Members of Parliament, making formal parliamentary submissions, and advocating for increased humanitarian assistance, refugee protection and principled diplomacy.

This report shares how God has been at work through the Baptist movement over the last three years and outlines how churches can continue to stand with Myanmar in prayer, compassion and hope.

# 1. Why Australian Baptists Have Stood with Myanmar

Since the military coup in February 2021, Myanmar has experienced widespread violence, political repression and humanitarian collapse. Civilians have faced indiscriminate airstrikes, destroyed infrastructure, arbitrary detention and the collapse of essential services such as healthcare and education.

Within Australian Baptist churches, these realities are not distant. Families in our congregations carry the trauma of displacement, separation from loved ones, and fear for communities still under threat.

Long-standing partnerships through Baptist World Aid Australia, Baptist Mission Australia and various Christian partners in Myanmar have further strengthened these bonds.

Standing with Myanmar has been an expression of discipleship — responding to suffering with compassion, seeking justice for the oppressed, and offering hope through both practical support and public witness.

## 2. The Humanitarian Crisis: 2023-2026

Over the past three years, Myanmar has been—and continues to be—one of the world's most complex humanitarian emergencies. Conflict between the military and resistance forces has spread nationwide, displacing millions and making access increasingly dangerous for humanitarian organisations.

By 2025–26, more than 16 million people were assessed as needing humanitarian assistance, including millions of children. The situation deteriorated further in March 2025 when a devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake affected over six million people, compounding existing vulnerabilities and overwhelming local capacity.

International funding shortfalls and restrictions imposed by the military regime have sharply reduced the availability of aid, leaving local churches and community networks as some of the only remaining responders in many areas.

## 3. Humanitarian Action: How Australian Baptists Responded

### ■ 3.1 Earthquake and Conflict Response

Following the March 2025 earthquake, Australian Baptists responded rapidly through trusted in-country and cross-border partners. Over the following 12 months, more than 150 families received essential items such as food, hygiene supplies, and mosquito nets. This assistance prioritized hard-to-reach communities in conflict-affected areas where formal humanitarian access was severely restricted. Support was delivered through discreet, locally rooted networks with deep community trust.

### ■ 3.2 Protecting and Supporting Children

Children have suffered disproportionately from displacement and trauma. With the support of Australian Baptist donors, eight Child Friendly Spaces were established in displacement settings. These spaces offer safe environments for play, learning, and mental health support. More than 600 children benefited, with families reporting improved emotional wellbeing and resilience.

### ■ 3.3 Supporting Learning in Crisis

The collapse of formal education systems has placed millions of children at risk. Christian Partners, supported by Australian Baptists, provided informal learning support and educational resources for approximately 3,000 school-aged children. These initiatives aimed to preserve children's dignity, safety and hope for the future amid ongoing instability.

## 4. Advocacy and Public Witness in Australia

Alongside humanitarian action, Australian Baptists have consistently engaged in advocacy to address the structural causes of suffering in Myanmar. The Stand with Myanmar campaign mobilized churches nationwide to pray, speak with elected representatives, and raise public awareness.

On two occasions, firstly in 2023 and again just last month in March 2026 Baptist World Aid Australia's Advocacy Manager, Mike Bartlett, gave evidence before the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee hearing on behalf of Australian Baptist Ministries, following submissions made to parliamentary inquiries on democracy and human rights in Myanmar, advocating for alternate methods of aid delivery.

Australian Baptists consistently called on the Federal Government to increase humanitarian funding, expand refugee and family reunion pathways, apply targeted sanctions against military enablers, and refuse to legitimise sham electoral processes.



In the last 12 months alone, the depth of Baptist engagement has been especially evident. More than \$50,000 has been raised by Australian Baptist churches and individuals to support humanitarian work in Myanmar.

In addition, more than 200 Australian Baptists have spoken out directly to their local Members of Parliament or Senators, either through coordinated digital advocacy actions, or through face-to-face meetings delegations in Canberra and in electorate offices, calling for compassion, protection and justice for the people of Myanmar.

## 5. Faith, Partnership and Lived Experience

Throughout this journey, Australian Baptists have been reminded of the vital role that local churches and community networks play in Myanmar. In many places, these networks remain the only source of aid, safety, and hope for families.

Diaspora testimonies shared within Australian churches speak of schools operating under threat, families fleeing airstrikes, and churches sheltering displaced neighbours. These lived experiences have shaped and strengthened the movement's response.

## 6. Looking Ahead: How Churches Can Continue to Stand With Myanmar

As the crisis in Myanmar continues, Australian Baptists remain committed to faithful solidarity. Churches are encouraged to:

- **Pray for peace, protection and justice for the people of Myanmar**
- **Give generously through Baptist World Aid Australia and Baptist Mission Australia**
- **Listen to and support Myanmar diaspora communities within our churches**
- **Continue to advocate, as led, for compassionate and principled Australian responses**

We give thanks for how God has worked through Australian Baptist churches over the past three years, and we trust him to continue bringing hope amid hardship.



*"We thank the Australian Baptists who are standing with us by sharing our responsibilities and burdens, raising their voices and praying for the restoration of freedom and democracy in Myanmar."*

**Burmese pastor in Australia**