

## **SurfStitch Joins with SurfAid to Help Nias Communities**

Australian online surf store - SurfStitch.com - has joined with SurfAid International to help raise money for SurfAid's Watsan (water and sanitation) program in Nias, off the coast of North Sumatra, Indonesia.

When buying online on the SurfStitch site (<http://www.surfstitch.com/index.cfm/ref/SurfAid>), customers have the option to contribute a few dollars to the SurfAid Watsan program, which aims to raise \$10,000 to provide clean water and sanitation for 315 people in the Nias sub-districts of Afulu and Alasa.

The SurfAid program will deliver safe, clean water and sanitation via wells, springs, rainwater tanks, public latrines and hygiene education at the cost of \$31.80 a person. It is part of a larger SurfAid Watsan program in Nias to service over 2,300 households and improve the lives of more than 11,000 people.

SurfStitch managing director, Lex Pedersen, said his company was excited to be lending support to SurfAid and being hands-on in creating a more responsible world.

“We are all passionate surfers at Surfstitch.com and are stoked to be able to give back to international communities in this SurfAid fundraising opportunity,” Lex said. “We all love travelling, so to be able to support both humanitarian and environmental issues is a bonus.”

SurfStitch is the latest e-commerce business to join The Footprints Network, an endeavour which results in the collection of micro-donations via online transactions for charity projects around the world.

Importantly, 100% of funds raised through the online system are distributed to projects run by reputable charities, with all administrative costs covered by founding member, The World Nomads Group ([worldnomads.com](http://worldnomads.com))

### **Background to the Watsan Program**

Ingestion of unsafe water, inadequate availability of water for hygiene and lack of access to sanitation contribute to about 1.5 million child deaths worldwide each year. SurfAid's research in Nias shows a 30 per cent prevalence of diarrhoea in children and it is a big contributing factor to the under-five-year-old child death rate of 66 deaths per 1,000 live births. In industrialised countries, the child death rate, on average, is six deaths per every 1,000 births.

The Watsan program stresses the link between hygiene and health, particularly targeting diarrhoea in young children, and it provides training, support and mentoring to Nias communities in an attempt to change current hygiene practices. There is also a focus on

community participation and ownership that has been a successful model for ensuring the long-term maintenance of the facilities.