

Recovery from Indian Ocean Tsunami

NUMBER 1: INFORMATION FOR VICTORIAN AGENCIES

**AT 17.00 HOURS 29
DECEMBER 2004**

What areas are affected ?

The earthquake which occurred at 7.59am local time on Sunday 26 December 2004 close to Aceh on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia and the tsunamis which followed have severely affected countries including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Who is affected?

At least 7,000 Australians are believed to be in the affected areas, the largest group of which are in Thailand.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirm that the tsunamis have unfortunately resulted in the deaths of eight Australians including one permanent resident. A 16 year old boy from Melbourne is one of the deceased.

Serious concerns are held for ten other Australians reported as missing by people in affected areas. It is understood that 20 Australians have been hospitalised and many more Australians affected, particularly in the area of Phuket, Thailand.

In addition to the general humanitarian concern about the scale of the impact, there are concerns for Australian citizens who

are travelling or living overseas, and also for Australian citizens with friends and family members who are citizens of affected countries.

What might people who have been affected need?

Providing affected people with information on support services that are available to them is important in assisting their recovery from an emergency event. Research and past experience shows, however, that when provided with basic information about the event and the effects of trauma, 90% of people recover without needing ongoing psychological support.

What assistance is available for Australians?

Australians wishing to check on friends and relatives in affected areas should call

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

1800 002 214

People affected can call

Tsunami hotline

1800 057 111

This service can provide information and referral to counselling and personal support services.

The Tsunami hotline will have resources such as fact sheets with basic information and key contact numbers, general

advice regarding health services and a central phone contact number for the Victorian Department of Human Services.

The Tsunami hotline is being supported by the Department of Human Services to ensure that appropriate and accurate information is made available to callers.

The Department will be assessing the need for additional information and advice and making arrangements as appropriate in the coming days and weeks.

What is being done to help the countries affected?

Charitable organisations have announced appeals to assist them to provide relief to affected areas. These appeals are being coordinated by AusAID. Any one wanting to make donations to these agencies can contact

Australian Red Cross
1800 811 700
www.redcross.org.au

CARE Australia
1800 020 046
www.careaustralia.org.au

Caritas Australia
1800 024 413
www.caritas.org.au

Oxfam/Community Aid
Abroad
1800 034 034
www.oxfam.org.au

World Vision
13 32 40
www.worldvision.org

Preparations are also underway to provide material aid in the form of blankets, water and food packs. Both the Victorian and Australian Governments have committed funds for relief.

What advice has been given to community agencies?

This information is being provided to key community agencies and health services. Telephone counselling services have been advised about assistance available. Written information sheets are being distributed to services including Hospitals, Community Health Services, General Practitioners, Local Government Authorities,

Mental Health Services, non-government agencies and Migrant Resource Centres.

What written information is there for people affected?

From today, travellers returning to Australia will be given information sheets and offered assistance.

A fact sheet titled Stress after Emergencies is attached for your use as appropriate.

Will more information be made available?

The Department of Human Services will provide updated information when this becomes available. This may be in the form of newsletters, further facts sheets or guidelines.

Given the Departments concern to provide agencies with basic information,

services may receive multiple copies of these resources.

A range of fact sheets are available on the Department's website including translated sheets in 23 languages.

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

The titles include:

- Traumatic experience
- Children and Crisis
- Families and Crisis

This information sheet and subsequent communications will be available on the Departments website.