



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP
Minister for the Environment, Heritage & the
Arts

The Hon Martin Ferguson MP
Minister for Resources and Energy
Minister for Tourism

31 October 2008

NEW TSUNAMI WARNING CENTRE FOR AUSTRALIA

Environment Minister, Peter Garrett and Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson today welcomed the official launch of the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre in Melbourne.

The Centre, operated by the Bureau of Meteorology and Geoscience Australia, was developed under the Government's \$68.9 million Australian Tsunami Warning System Project.

"The launch of this Centre is a major milestone in establishing Australia's self reliance in detecting and issuing tsunami warnings. With state of the art technology it will enable an assessment of any threat to Australian shores within 30 minutes from the time an undersea earthquake is detected," Mr Garrett said.

"This will ensure we can quickly quantify the level of threat posed to the Australian coastline and its communities and develop our response."

Minister Ferguson said the joint operations centre brought together Geoscience Australia's expertise in seismic detection and risk assessment and the Bureau of Meteorology's expertise in sea level monitoring, tsunami forecasting and issuing warnings for severe weather hazards such as cyclones.

"It is particularly pleasing to see such a constructive working relationship between the two science agencies in Australia which between them monitor and report on all natural hazards."

"This is an important project. The majority of Australians live along our coastal strips, and the project will help save lives and mitigate the effect of tsunami on our coastal communities."

The new enhanced warnings will include detailed information such as which areas of coastline may be affected, together with an assessment of whether the impact of a tsunami will be confined to the marine environment or may include dangerous inundation of the land.

As part of the detection and verification process, the Bureau is installing a network of sea level monitoring infrastructure in the form of coastal tide gauges and Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami (DARTTM) buoys.

The new Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre will join the global warning network with others such as the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii and the Japan Meteorological Agency in Tokyo.