

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 2 November 2005

---

**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** GEOSCIENCE AUSTRALIA  
**TOPIC:** TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM  
**REFERENCE:** WRITTEN QUESTION

**QUESTION No.SBI-26**

**Senator Webber** asked:

Please update the Committee on the work done by Geoscience Australia this year on the Tsunami Warning System in the Indian Ocean.

**ANSWER**

The Australian Tsunami Warning System is a cross-agency project being developed by Geoscience Australia, Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), Emergency Management Australia (EMA), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and AusAID.

The funding provided by the government for this project has three policy objectives:

1. to provide a comprehensive tsunami warning system for Australia;
2. to support international efforts to establish an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system; and
3. to contribute to the facilitation of tsunami warnings for the South West Pacific.

Within Geoscience Australia, the following milestones (which relate to all policy objectives) have been reached:

- Key staff are in place and recruitment for additional operational staff is underway.
- Geoscience Australia has worked with BoM and EMA to plan the design for the installation and operation of the entire system, and detailed planning to upgrade Geoscience Australia's seismograph network, computing, power and data communications systems for 24/7 operational reliability is well advanced.
- An interim seismograph station has been installed on Christmas Island. Earthquakes to the immediate north of Australia are assessed as posing a high risk to Australia, and Christmas Island is the closest Australian territory on which we can establish a seismograph station.
- Orders have been placed for the supply of new seismographs following a tender process. Delivery is expected early in 2006.
- Site surveys have begun for several new seismograph stations in northern Australia.
- Tenders will be called within the next month for the supply of services to upgrade the existing seismograph stations and install several new ones.
- Geoscience Australia is negotiating with the Global Seismographic Network in the United States of America for real-time access to the data from their seismograph stations to expand our coverage in the Indian and Pacific Ocean region.
- Geoscience Australia is participating in a number of Intersessional Working Groups of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System and Pacific Tsunami Warning System that will lead to improved seismographic procedures and access to national seismographic networks in the region.
- Geoscience Australia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia to provide tsunami inundation modelling of communities at risk from future tsunamis originating to the north and west of Australia.