



New South Wales Government

The Hon Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Small Business

State Emergency Service tsunami role recognised

June 17, 2009

The State Emergency Service is to be officially recognised as New South Wales' first line of response in the event of a tsunami, Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan said today.

Mr Whan said the State Government has introduced amendments to the *State Emergency Service Act* to reflect the Service's role in tsunami planning and response.

"The SES is the designated NSW combat agency responsible for tsunami, in a logical extension of its expertise in flood planning and response," he said.

"The SES was responsible for the development of the NSW Tsunami Plan, as a sub-plan of the NSW Disaster Plan, and has been a consistent and committed participant in the Australian Tsunami Working Group for four years.

"The SES, supported by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and Emergency Management Australia, has also in recent years delivered a series of tsunami update briefings to all coastal emergency management agencies.

"As a result of its efforts, tsunami planning in this State is now well advanced."

Under the NSW Tsunami Plan, the Service's roles include leading the development of NSW warning systems, developing education programs, controlling response operations and directing necessary evacuations.

"The volunteers and staff of the SES are well known for their hard work and commitment to the people of this State," Mr Whan said.

"Their efforts will be crucial to the safety and wellbeing of NSW coastal communities either under threat of or actually impacted by a tsunami, so it is appropriate that this important role is recognised in legislation."

Mr Whan said with changes in its responsibilities over recent years, the SES had changed its structure to be more consistent with other emergency services in NSW.

"Reflecting the important position of the SES in NSW, we are also proposing re-naming the head of the SES from Director-General to Commissioner, bringing this into line with the other emergency services," he said.

"This more accurately reflects the operational focus of the SES and its leader."



The Hon Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Small Business

New South Wales Government

Media contact: Garth Montgomery 0408 864 851