



The Hon. Joe Hockey

MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

MEDIA RELEASE

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Support for Australian tsunami victims and their families

The Australian Government today announced a package of measures to assist Australians affected by the tsunami which struck earlier this week.

The Government will assist with reasonable costs not covered by insurance associated with the death or serious injury of an Australian as a result of the tsunami disaster. This will include funeral expenses, out-of-pocket medical costs, domestic travel costs associated with visiting an injured family member in Australia and other domestic travel following emergency evacuation flights.

In addition to the existing Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade consular hotline (1800 002 214) for those wishing to check on friends and relatives in affected areas, a second hotline has been set up to provide information on all other aspects of the Government's assistance package.

The hotline number is 1800 057 111.

This hotline is for those seeking information about their entitlements, seeking counselling, medical or other health information, or enquiring as to whether their medical skills can be utilised.

The Australian Government is working closely with the states and territories, domestic and international aid agencies, industry and members of the public to respond to the magnitude of this disaster. It welcomes the generous level of cooperation which has been extended and the donations which have been made to various appeals.

The most effective form of assistance which can be offered by members of the public wishing to help is a cash donation to the charity of their choice.

Apart from delivering the support measures, Centrelink will have a presence at Australian airports so that staff can meet with people on their return to provide referrals to professional support and advice on assistance that may be available. Centrelink is endeavouring to meet as many flights as possible returning from the tsunami-affected region.

Centrelink already has a number of social workers on the ground in Thailand with others on stand-by to join the relief effort in coming days.

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