



## Coral Sea buoy to boost tsunami warning

March 14, 2008 05:03pm

Article from: AAP

A TSUNAMI detection buoy has been placed in the Coral Sea, lifting Australia's capacity to answer an immediate threat from the oceanic phenomenon.

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett said the buoy was now operational and monitoring changes in sea levels for signs of potential threat from the South Solomon and New Hebrides trenches to the east coast of Australia.

It's the second buoy to be installed - the first was off Tasmania - as Australia develops a warning system for its vast coastline.

Mr Garrett said the devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 was a stark reminder of the potential for destruction caused by the sudden sea floor movements.

"The sooner that people can be alerted to the chance of a tsunami the greater the likelihood that they can take action and survive," he said in a statement.

"Strategically placed tsunami buoys provide real-time tsunami detection as waves travel across the open sea."

The Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami (DART) buoy is part of the \$68.9 million Australian Tsunami Warning System.

Last week's installation follows the successful installation of a DART buoy 1200 kilometres off the south-east coast of Tasmania in April 2007.

The DART buoys consist of a bottom pressure sensor anchored to the seafloor, and a companion moored surface buoy. An acoustic link transmits data from the bottom pressure sensor to the surface buoy, and satellite links relay data to warning centres for scientific analysis by the Bureau of Meteorology.

The Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 was triggered by an undersea earthquake off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

In one of the deadliest natural disasters in history, it killed more than 225,000 people in eleven countries, and inundated Indian Ocean coastal communities with waves up to 30 metres.

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