

## Tsunami Detection Centre Opened

**A**n operations room that has been established by Geoscience Australia to detect earthquakes in the Australian region following the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami has been officially opened by federal Industry, Tourism and Resources Minister, Ian Macfarlane.

The centre will be operational around the clock, monitoring around 39 Australian seismic stations and around 70 overseas stations at any one time, with information being shared with other countries in the region. It will detect earthquakes in the region and determine whether they are likely to cause a tsunami by examining the magnitude, location, depth and other seismic characteristics.

Macfarlane said the Bureau of Meteorology would collect tide gauge data and the two

agencies would work together to determine whether a tsunami warning should be issued. The operations hub is part of the development of an Australian Tsunami Warning Centre (ATWC), expected to be operational by the middle of 2007.

The ATWC is part of the Australian Tsunami Warning System (ATWS), a collaborative project involving Geoscience Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, Emergency Management Australia, and AusAID. The programme is coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The role of the ATWS is to provide a comprehensive tsunami warning system for Australia, support international efforts to establish an Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System and contribute to the facilitation of tsunami warnings for the South Pacific. ■