# Appendix 2C – Exercise Scenario Guide

Tsunami Discussion Exercise

The guide supports the facilitator guide (appendix 2A) and slide deck (appendix 2B).

## Scenario Planning Guide – Tsunami Discussion Exercise

|  | Storyline | Trigger questions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| General Idea | **Time: 11:10, 17 February**  At 10:06 on 17 February, a magnitude 7.9 undersea earthquake occurs approximately 250 kilometers south of the Solomon Islands. Geoscience Australia detects the quake, and by 10:21, an official notification of a potentially tsunamigenic earthquake is issued. This notification rapidly spreads through media outlets and emergency services. At 10:35, a National Tsunami Watch Bulletin is released. Initial reports of damage to communities around the Solomon Sea emerge almost immediately. Major news outlets pick up the story, heightening public awareness of a potential tsunami threat to Australia.  At 10:55, the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre issues the first official Tsunami Land Threat Warning for major inundation in low lying coastal areas along the entire east coast of Australia. It states that the first tsunami waves could reach your community by approximately 14:35 and advises people in threatened areas to move to higher ground (above 10 metres) or at least 1 kilometre inland from the coast.  The tsunami warning is immediately disseminated to local emergency services, including the NSW State Emergency Service (SES), which activates Zone Incident Management Teams (IMTs) across the warning areas and the SES State Command Centre. Local Emergency Operations Controllers (LEOCONs) and Regional Emergency Operations Controllers (REOCONs), in coordination with the SES as the combat agency, activate local and regional emergency operations centres. Functional area delegates and Local / Regional Emergency Management Officers (LEMOs / REMO’s) are called in to provide critical support for the SES-led operations.  Adding to the complexity, unseasonably high temperatures have attracted large crowds to beaches, campgrounds, and coastal parks across the region. On this weekday, only council-patrolled beaches have lifeguards present, leaving many local beaches unmonitored. Given the warm weather and time of day, it is anticipated that beaches will be crowded.  At one primary beach, a special outdoor event is underway for individuals with physical disabilities. Approximately 45 participants, many of whom rely on specialised beach wheelchairs, are attending with the support of event staff, caregivers, and volunteer lifeguards.  Working alongside the SES, as the statutory combat agency, the Local and Regional Emergency Management Committees (LEMC/REMC) must swiftly establish functional Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs). These EOCs will play a vital role in enabling rapid support to the combat agency and the community during the dynamic and rapidly evolving warning, impact, and early recovery phases of the emergency. | N/A |
| Special Idea 1 | **Time 11:10, 17 February:** The LEOCON/REOCON activates the local/regional EOC, urgently calling in support agency liaisons and functional area coordinators to assist the SES IMT in managing community impacts. The anticipated time to impact is 14:35. | 1. What are the immediate challenges in activating the EOC and mobilising the required agency liaisons and functional area coordinators? 2. How should the EOC prioritise tasks to provide the most effective support to the SES IMT during the short timeframe before impact? 3. What procedures must be enacted and followed to activate the EOC, and how would the activation process be practically implemented once the decision has been made? 4. What protocols should be implemented to ensure timely and accurate communication between the EOC, SES IMT, and supporting agencies? 5. How can the EOC manage and coordinate incoming information to reduce duplication and ensure clarity for decision-making? 6. What strategies should be considered by the LEMC/REMC supporting agencies to ensure the rapid deployment of resources and personnel to support the IMT and community in the lead-up to the tsunami impact? 7. With 3 hours and 25 minutes until the anticipated impact, what specific actions should the EOC take to support the IMT address public warnings, evacuation logistics, and resource allocation? |
| Special Idea 2 | **Time 14:15, 17 February:** The first tsunami waves strike the coast, rapidly inundating low-lying coastal areas. Emergency services across the coast are overwhelmed with triple-zero calls and requests for assistance from individuals stranded on rooftops, in trees, or reported missing. | 1. What specific support can the EOC provide to the SES IMT to address the overwhelming volume of triple-zero calls and resource requests, ensuring effective prioritisation? 2. How can the EOC ensure effective communication and information-sharing with local, regional, and state-level EOC’s to maintain situational awareness and support operational decision-making? 3. What mechanisms should supporting agency liaisons within the EOC implement to ensure communication flow and situational awareness across both the IMT and EOC 4. How can the EOC assist in mitigating public panic and confusion during this phase, particularly through effective collaboration with functional areas responsible for public messaging, in collaboration with the IMT? |
| Special Idea 3 | **Time 15:32, 17 February:** NSW Health and Ambulance liaisons in the EOC receive numerous reports, via incident management systems and operations centres, of large numbers of injured individuals seeking help. Many are self-presenting or being transported to sports grounds, evacuation centres, and higher ground. These reports are corroborated by similar SITREPs flowing into the EOC from the IMT.  The injuries reported include significant cases such as fractures, lacerations, and instances of loss of consciousness. First aid providers and emergency personnel at these sites are quickly overwhelmed by the sheer volume of casualties. Compounding the situation, ambulance services have reached maximum operational capacity. In many areas, ambulances are unable to access affected locations due to extensive flooding and debris obstructing roads. | 1. How can the EOC coordinate with functional areas and supporting agencies to provide additional medical support to evacuation centres and sports grounds where first responders are overwhelmed? 2. What role can the EOC play in responding to ambulance services being overwhelmed, particularly in coordinating support for casualty management at evacuation centres and other impacted locations? 3. How can the EOC assist in identifying alternative transport or access routes for medical teams and resources to reach affected areas despite flooding and debris? 4. What interagency coordination strategies can the EOC implement to manage the surge in medical needs, ensuring resources like personnel, equipment, and supplies are distributed effectively? |
| Special Idea 4 | **Time 16:30, 17 February:** As the first series of waves subside and subsequent waves continue to arrive, it becomes clear that most roads into coastal communities remain completely blocked by debris, preventing access by emergency services and recovery teams.  Emergency services are still grappling with thousands of outstanding calls for assistance and rescue within inaccessible areas. Tens of thousands of displaced residents are stranded at evacuation points, sports grounds, and within inland communities, with no access to their homes or immediate shelter. | 1. How can the LEMC/REMC coordinate with functional areas and supporting agencies to prioritise and expedite the clearing of debris to restore access to coastal communities? 2. With emergency services still addressing thousands of outstanding calls for assistance, how should the EOC prioritise resources and support to the combat agency in addressing the most urgent needs? 3. What immediate actions can the EOC and supporting agencies take to ensure adequate shelter, supplies, and support for the tens of thousands of displaced residents stranded in evacuation points and inland communities? |

## Injects

Below injects can be used by the facilitator to further guide participants. The facilitator can choose the timing of injects based on the exercise as it progresses.

|  | Storyline | Trigger questions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Inject 1 | **Time 11:21, 17 February:** The Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre issues an urgent tsunami warning update, revising the expected impact time from 14:35 to 14:15, 20 minutes earlier than initially anticipated. | 1. How should the EOC adapt its operational priorities and timelines in response to the revised impact time to ensure preparedness measures are completed before the new deadline? |
| Inject 2 | **Time 11:23, 17 February:** The Surf Life Saving liaison, on the way to the EOC, receives a report from lifeguards at a major local beach indicating they are struggling to evacuate disabled individuals to higher ground. Most of the buses that brought the group earlier in the day have already left, and lifeguards are stretched thin, attempting to assist and evacuate other beachgoers. | 1. What immediate strategies can the EOC and supporting agencies implement to provide additional support to the IMT and lifeguards, so as to ensure the safe evacuation of all individuals, particularly those with disabilities? 2. How should the EOC ensure this information is relayed to the IMT and situational awareness is maintained across both the IMT and EOC? |
| Inject 3 | **Time 11:51, 17 February:** The SES Zone IMT receives a report of a small commercial fishing vessel stranded approximately 600 metres offshore within your zone due to an engine malfunction. The crew of five urgently requests assistance to prevent the vessel from running aground or capsizing as the impending tsunami waves approach.  Operational resources are fully committed, raising concerns that other vessels in the area may be unaware of the threat or may also require assistance. The IMT escalates the situation to the EOC, requesting support to source additional resources to address the stranded vessel and to ensure warnings are effectively disseminated to all vessels across the affected warning areas | 1. How should the EOC and supporting agencies respond to this request from the IMT, considering the current situation and competing priorities? 2. What actions can the EOC, or LEMC/REMC, in collaboration with the IMT, take to escalate the wider issue of warning dissemination to vessels at sea? |
| Inject 4 | **Time 14:20, 17 February:** The EOC becomes aware of total power losses throughout the inundation zones, with outages extending into broader coastal towns and communities. Significant quantities of live powerlines and electrical infrastructure within the inundation zone are reported to be damaged, destroyed, or submerged, creating widespread safety risks. | 1. How should the EOC coordinate with functional areas and energy providers to address the immediate safety risks associated with live powerlines and damaged infrastructure, while also managing community impacts from the power loss? 2. What actions should the EOC take now to initiate recovery efforts and prepare for extended power outages in widespread areas? |
| Inject 5 | **Time 14:45, 17 February:** Rescue helicopters attempting to reach stranded individuals report multiple unauthorised drones operating over the impact area, significantly hindering their ability to conduct rescue operations safely. The IMT, fully engaged in responding to the broader incident, escalates the issue to the EOC, requesting urgent support to mitigate the drone hazard and ensure airspace safety for ongoing rescue efforts. | 1. What steps can the EOC take to rapidly mitigate the unauthorised drone activity and support the SES IMT in restoring aerial rescue operations? |
| Inject 6 | **Time 16:45, 17 February:** The IMT receives and escalates to the EOC reports of several major and local bridges into coastal communities that have been damaged, destroyed, or deemed unsafe for use. As a result, some areas will remain inaccessible by road, even after debris is cleared. | 1. What role should the LEMC/REMC play in initiating early recovery efforts, such as coordinating damage assessments and planning for the transition from response to recovery? |

## Condensed Scenario Timeline

The following provides a condensed timeline of key scenario events. This exercise is a facilitated hypothetical discussion and is not intended to be conducted in real time. Instead, it will follow the logical sequence of events outlined below, guided by the facilitator in accordance with the facilitator guide and accompanying presentation.

| Item | Scenario Time (24 hour) | Event |
| --- | --- | --- |
| General Idea | 10:06 | Initial earthquake |
| General Idea | 10:21 | Potentially tsunamigenic earthquake notification issued |
| General Idea | 10:35 | National Tsunami Watch Bulletin issued |
| General Idea | 10:55 | First Tsunami Land Threat Warning for major inundation |
| Special Idea 1 | 11:10 | Exercise Start Point: EOC’s activated |
| Inject 1 | 11:21 | Tsunami warning update |
| Inject 2 | 11:23 | Evacuation support request |
| Inject 3 | 11:51 | Stranded fishing vessel |
| Special Idea 2 | 14:15 | First waves impact coast |
| Inject 4 | 14:20 | Total power loss |
| Inject 5 | 14:45 | Unauthorised drones |
| Special Idea 3 | 15:32 | Mass casualty reports |
| Special Idea 4 | 16:30 | Access blocked to impact zones and stranded residents |
| Inject 6 | 16:45 | Bridges damaged and destroyed |