



## Media release

3 November 2017

### Tsunami awareness saves lives

World Tsunami Awareness Day on Sunday 5 November is a chance for all of us to find out more about tsunami and how to prepare for them, Civil Defence Minister Kris Faafoi says.

“Today I have been visiting Seatoun School who have demonstrated use of their tsunami evacuation steps. Seatoun School recognised their tsunami risk and installed steps for their students and wider community so that everyone can evacuate to higher ground.

“All of New Zealand’s coast line is at risk of tsunami.”

“For most of us that means we live near, or visit, places that are at risk and we need to know the right action to take. For a local source tsunami, which could arrive in minutes, there won’t be time for an official warning. It is important to recognise the natural warning signs and act quickly.”

“If you are at the coast and experience any of the following:

- Feel a strong earthquake that makes it hard to stand up, or a long earthquake that lasts a minute or more
- See a sudden rise or fall in sea level
- Hear loud and unusual noises from the sea.

“Move immediately to the nearest high ground, or as far inland as you can.”

“World Tsunami Awareness Day is a chance for all New Zealanders to learn more about the tsunami risk in our regions, know how to prepare for them and update our plans to keep our families safe.”

“It’s important to stay informed if there is an emergency. Know which radio stations to listen to, which websites and social media to follow, get to know your neighbours, and check whether your phone can receive Emergency Mobile Alerts.”

“It’s great to see that a new nationwide emergency alert channel is being implemented to complement the existing channels to stay informed. A live nationwide test of the Emergency Mobile Alert system will be held on 26 November 2017 to test the system.”

Emergency Mobile Alert messages are sent using cell broadcast technology, so there is no need to sign up or download an app, and can be targeted to affected areas, so you will only get it if the emergency is in your area.

The alert messages can only be sent by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management, Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups, NZ Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

You can find out whether your phone can receive the alerts at [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz). Make sure your phone is on the most up to date operating system.

In a distant or regional tsunami there may be time to send an alert. For local source tsunami, there may not be time to send an alert so it is important to recognise the natural warnings – ‘Long or Strong, Get Gone’.

Emergency Mobile Alert is an additional channel to help keep people safe in an emergency. It does not replace other emergency alerts. If you feel your life is in danger, don't wait for an official warning. Take immediate action.

Visit [www.happens.nz](http://www.happens.nz) to find out how to prepare for emergencies.

### **About World Tsunami Awareness Day**

A tsunami is a series of waves caused by large earthquakes and the waves can grow to become a fast moving wall of water. In the past 100 years, more than 260,000 people have lost their lives in 58 separate tsunami across the world. At an average of 4,600 deaths per disaster, the toll is greater than any other natural hazard.

In December 2015, the UN General Assembly designated 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day.

The UN General Assembly has called on all countries, international bodies and civil society to observe the day, in order to raise tsunami awareness and share innovative approaches to risk reduction.

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*Attached Photos (next page): Civil Defence Minister Kris Faafoi with students from Seatoun School on the school's tsunami evacuation steps.*

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