

**Dr Steven Cook**

**The Pacific tsunami response; have we learned from the past?**

Disaster Medicine is becoming an area of increasing importance and increasingly a civilian response is expected either as the main response or to augment the military/ NGO response.

In Australia, Australian Medical Assistance Teams ( AUSMAT) for disaster response both domestically and internationally have been established or being rapidly developed by the states. These civilian teams will be increasingly expected to be the front line of disaster response.

The anesthetist plays a key role in these AUSMAT teams. The anaesthetist has the unique and important skill set for use in disaster medicine including patient triage, assessment and resuscitation, analgesia and anaesthesia for surgery, postoperative care and aeromedical evacuation.

This presentation will reflect some of the lessons learned from recent disasters such as Aceh, Samoa and Haiti, discuss the AUSMAT concept, examine the role of the anaesthetist and look to the future in disaster management in the Asia Pacific region.