AUSTRALIAN PLANNER

PIA’S TSUNAMI PROJECT

We welcome Hemantha Jayasundera, our in-country Project Manager who has now commenced on the project. Hemantha visited Australia in late March 28th working in Melbourne on the project and attending national congress. We also hosted two members of the Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka (ITPSL) at National Congress, Lalith Mirihagalle and Piyal Silva.

Also at Congress 2006, Robert Tickner the CEO of Australian Red Cross (ARC) announced their support for the project and handed over $300,000 in funding, presenting two years of support for the local level planning, skills capacity building components of the project. Thank you ARC!

Our first Australian Project Steering Committee meeting was held in April 2006 concurrently with National Congress. High on our agenda was discussion of the project activities and in particular the deployment of Australian planners to Sri Lanka

Project Volunteers
We are currently selecting planners to go to Sri Lanka this year, the first of an ongoing process. We are partnering with Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in relation to support for our volunteers including pre-departure briefing. We are planning for the first group of planners to be in Sri Lanka in August. Expressions of interest from Australian planners to be part of the project continue to be received.

Sri Lanka
The Project Manager has identified suitable office premises in Colombo. There will be a formal opening of the office when the CEO is in Colombo in June. The first meeting of the Sri Lanka Project Committee will held on June 2nd in Colombo and the CEO, the Chair of International Division and Project staff will be attending. Meetings with project partners in Sri Lanka are also planned including the Australian High Commission and Red Cross.

National Congress
A session was held at the PIA national congress titled “Tsunami – response to international disaster”. Speakers included Robert Tickner, CEO of Australian Red Cross, Hemantha Jayasundera and Kylie Ferguson speaking on her experiences as a planner in Aceh. There will be a session at next year’s congress in Perth too where planners who have returned from working in Sri Lanka will speak about their experiences.

State and Local government Support
We are keen to have Australian State and Local governments as project partners, particularly to support planners on staff who are interested in volunteering and to provide short term placements for Sri Lankan planners as part of the capacity building component. We would like to meet with State planning departments, Local Governments and peak local government bodies throughout Australia to discuss this.

To register your interest in being involved please complete the form on the PIA website. If you have any questions or comments please contact Stephanie Knox
sknox@planning.org.au

Stephanie Knox
Project Director
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