

Australians find deeper pockets for good causes

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AUSTRALIANS are becoming more generous, a report on charitable giving shows.

The Queensland University of Technology study found a record \$1.47 billion in tax-deductible donations was given in the 2004-05 financial year, up 26 per cent on the previous year. The average donation was \$341.29, an increase of more than \$40.

Victoria was the second largest donor state after NSW, with \$394 million in tax-deductible donations.

Much of the surge in giving was attributable to the response to the Asian tsunami that struck on Boxing Day, 2004, killing about 300,000 people mainly in Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Australians gave \$394 million to that cause, with \$273.8 million coming from individuals.

Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes, of the university's Centre for **Philanthropy** and Non-profit Studies, said donations to charities had steadily increased in recent years, riding on the back of a strong economy.

The outpouring of sympathy for tsunami victims had contributed to a rise in charitable giving, he said.

"The fear for many fund-raisers was that people would have spent all their money allocated to charity (on the tsunami). What we found is that giving is elastic - it will grow. As long as people see a need, they will keep on giving, particularly in ebullient economic times."

Professor McGregor-Lowndes said it was not possible to say whether particular charities were benefiting more than others.

The figures also showed that people earning more than \$1 million a year were donating more than they had done in the past.

"I think there's a general trend at the moment of people becoming more generous and concerned with **philanthropy** and volunteering, giving of time," Professor McGregor-Lowndes said.

"When people give more money, there's also a giving of time as well."