

# Tourist responses to the Lombok Earthquake, 2018 – Rapid Assessment Study

## Disasters and Tourists



The Cairns Post, "Bali resort town is back in business after Lombok quake".

## About Lombok

On the boundary of the Australian Plate and the Sunda Plate.

Popular tourist destination.

Adjacent to Bali.



Laurent Bigué, Gili Air Eastern coast looking at Lombok”.



Petter Lindgren, “Segara Anak”.

# About Lombok



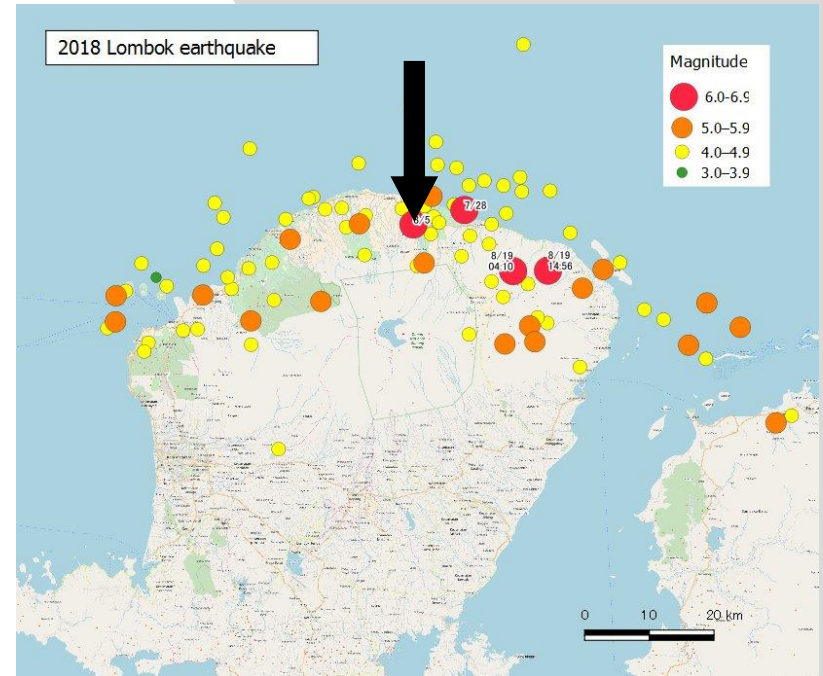
## About the quake

Occurred at 19:46:35 (local time)  
on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

M 6.9 earthquake at 31.0km depth

Preceded by M 6.4 event on July  
29<sup>th</sup> and numerous aftershocks

Tsunami warning issued but later  
cancelled



Phoenix7777, "Map of 2018 Lombok earthquake". (Arrow added)

## About the quake

Reports indicate 392 fatalities, 1353 injuries, damages to 67875 houses, 606 schools, 6 bridges, 3 hospitals, 10 health centres, 15 mosques, 50 prayer rooms

Hundreds of residents evacuated to high ground fearing tsunami

Evacuation of the Gili Islands



Basarnas personnel, "Tourists on the beach of Gili Trawangan, waiting to evacuate".



## Method / Results

120 articles were coded with 152 unique interviewees

Interviewees were spread across Bali (n=54), Lombok(n=46), the Gili Islands (n=28) and elsewhere

Interviewees were tourists (n=108), local residents (n=20) and expats (n=9)

Almost all interviewees were between 18 and 60 years old



Reuters/Beawiharta, "Tourists carry their belongings as they leave Gili Trawangan".

## Results

Most interviewees were at a restaurant (n=29), in a hotel (n=29) or at home (n=12)

Consequences frequently observed included collapsed buildings (n=46), debris/falling objects (n=29), injuries (n=24) and power cuts (n=22)

*The earthquake hit and all the buildings were falling down, we ran to a hill then spent the night there with no communication on what was going on. There was a huge 100-metre tower everyone thought was going to fall on us too with all the aftershocks. We were all worried of a tsunami hitting the whole night, people were climbing up trees and locals were screaming and praying (Interviewee)*



## Results

Most interviewees ran outside during the quake (n=43)

Interviewees most commonly observed others running from buildings (n=44), screaming (n=38) and crying (n=10)

Immediately after the quake, a large number of interviewees fled to high ground fearing a tsunami (n=29)

*We were still sleeping when we felt the earthquake, so we rushed outside of our building. There was about 20 seconds of shaking, the water in the pool was making quite large waves (Interviewee)*

## Results

Interviewees were largely reliant on locals (n=9) and tourism staff (n=9) for directions as to what to do or simply followed other tourists (n=4)

*“I panicked and froze at first, I remember reading once that you’re not supposed to leave a building when there’s an earthquake, but a lot of the locals we were staying with were making their way outside so we decided to just follow them.” (Interviewee)*

*“All the locals were frantically running and putting on life jackets. We followed them up to higher ground, which was a steep, uneven climb to the top of a hill in darkness.” (Interviewee)*

*“All the hotel guests were running so I did too.” (Interviewee)*

## Results

Interviewees described their emotions during the quake as fearful (n=41), panicked (n=15), calm (n=9) and various other emotions

*“Ella was crying and saying how she wouldn’t have time to say goodbye to the kids. It sounds a bit melodramatic, but hell it was frightening”. (Interviewee)*

*“On the mountain every time there was an aftershock, there was a wave of screams that spread through the valley and the prayers got louder”. (Interviewee)*

## Results

Individual responses may have differed based upon the earthquake risk of their country of origin

*“About 90 per cent of us were westerners and we're not trained for how to react in this situation.” (Interviewee from a country not prone to quakes)*

*“It's scary when the ground is buckling under your feet. My partner and I were out of bed and under the table in a flash and we then immediately evacuated the house. When I was a child at school we had earthquake drills. Best training ever.” (Interviewee from a quake prone country)*

## Results

Over the next few days, many interviewees evacuated (n=50); some after camping outdoors the evening of the earthquake (n=18)

Almost all the tourists evacuated soon after the quake (74%) while those who stayed were mostly local residents and expats



Basarnas personnel, "Tourists on the beach of Gili Trawangan, waiting to evacuate"

## Issues evacuating the Gili Islands

Response was uncoordinated and there was insufficient transport capacity to account for the mass exodus



Phnom Penh Post, "People attempting to leave Gili Trawangan on the day after the quake"



One News Page, "Terrified tourists flee Gili Islands after Lombok quake"



## Issues evacuating the Gili Islands

Many interviewees reported problems as they tried to evacuate the Gili Islands

*“Finding it impossible to get off of Gili T, all of the tourist shops are shut and people are panicked jumping onto boats. It’s going to be a long day.” (Interviewee)*

*“We just witnessed one of the boats get completely overfilled with tourists climbing on, with the officials trying to keep them back off the boat, pushing them and shoving them. That boat still hasn't left yet.” (Interviewee)*

*“People are punching and hitting each other.” (Interviewee)*



AP, “Rescue vessels are said to be leaving half empty with ‘selected’ evacuees”.

# Australia is not immune

Australia has a large tourism industry



Penny Dahl  
@Pennycopter

Follow

Crazy queues at the Hamilton Island airport...friend says she's witnessed the best and worst of people as they leave  
[#CycloneDebbie](#) [#BIGWET](#)



12:10 AM - 30 Mar 2017

*"Daydream Island has requested the military,"  
Whitsunday Mayor Andrew Wilcox said.  
"They are running out of drinking water".  
"They will be transferred by air."  
(Daily Mercury)*



## Summary

Tourists are uniquely vulnerable

People don't do what they are told on websites

People follow instructions of others around them in absence of authorities

Previous experience could be important

There can be panic and chaos – expect it

## Practice outcomes

Information on disaster risks should consider tourists as a key audience

Tourism operators have a key role in promoting awareness of local risks

Tourists when travelling overseas should consider risks present at their destination

Tourism operators need to be connected with disaster management structures

Tourism operators may also provide capabilities to assist

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