

“Volcanoes and Singapore?”

Adam SWITZER

Nanyang Technological University

Around 10% of the world’s population (~800 million people) live within 100 km of a potentially active volcano. Volcanic areas are becoming ever more populated and urbanised, and the potential for volcanic disasters is therefore increasing. While there are no volcanoes in Singapore, we do lie in one of the most volcanically active areas in the world: more than three-quarters of the world’s volcanic threat is in southeast Asia (Indonesia and the Philippines). Volcanic ash from the 1991 eruption of Pinatubo reached Singapore, nearly 2,400 km away. Historically, human and economic losses from volcanic eruptions have been smaller than those from other natural hazards. However, many volcanoes are capable of eruptions much larger than those witnessed in historic times. Very large volcanic eruptions can threaten the global environment and civilisation. This talk will provide an overview of volcanoes and volcanic eruptions, with a particular focus on the hazards and risks they pose for society and what is being done to minimize them.