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From the President . . .

Happy New Year, and welcome to our first newsletter of 2025. Hope you all had a great break!

2025 will be a significant year for us in the earthquake engineering sector, with a range of events, activities and releases to look out for!



Interim Technical Specification TS 1170, providing guidance on seismic loads for the design of New Buildings, is expected to be released, and is being anxiously awaited by engineering practitioners.

Review of the Seismic Risk Management of Existing Buildings, being spearheaded by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment on behalf of the government, during the first half of 2025. NZSEE released an initial [position statement](#) in late 2024 and is hoping to provide further inputs. If you have any comments that you would like to raise or contribute, please [contact us](#).

Improving Seismic Performance and Retrofit Guidance resources are under development with the active involvement of NZSEE, and guidance documents are expected to be released later in the year for comment.

Low Damage Design Guidelines are being finalised, led by SESOC, and can be expected to be released as a draft this year.

Design Guide on Nonlinear Response History Analysis was developed by SESOC, NZSEE and NZGS, and released for public comment in 2024, and due to be released soon.

Interim Guidance on the Application of TS 1170 for the Design of Base Isolated Buildings, is being led by NZSEE, and will be finalized and released soon.

Survey on Training on the Use of the MBIE-NZSEE Assessment Guidelines and Strengthening Techniques, to assess the needs of members, see information later in this newsletter.



UPCOMING EVENTS

[NZSEE 2025 Conference](#)

Auckland, New Zealand

8 – 10 April 2025

<https://confer.eventsair.com/nzsee2025/>

[SESOC 2025](#)

Tākina, Wellington

25 – 27 June 2025

<https://www.confer.co.nz/2025/sesoc-2025/>

[19 WCSI Conference](#)

Berkeley, California, USA

15 - 19 September 2025

<https://19wcsi.org>

[NZGS Symposium 2025](#)

15 – 18 October 2025

Venue TBC, Auckland

<https://confer.eventsair.com/nzgs2025/>

NZSEE Annual Conference on Harnessing Uncertainty and Driving Positive Change for a Sustainable and Resilient Future, in Auckland, 8-10 April 2025. This will be a valuable event given all the activities happening in our sector. We look forward to your registration and participation in the conference. Please register early, so we can plan the conference well. Also, we would urge you all to look at sponsorship opportunities, which we are tailoring to help you support this important event, as well as attend.

Obituary

As we returned to work in January, we were shocked to hear two pieces of sad news, the passing away of our Fellows, Lou Robinson from Dunedin and David Johnston from Wellington.

David was Professor of Disaster Management and Director of the Joint Centre for Disaster Research, in the School of Psychology at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand, a centre he established in 2006. David was a fellow of our Society and his contributions, leadership, mentorship and dedication to social science and emergency management will be greatly missed. See Obituary below and information on a Memorial event for David at the coming weekend.

Lou Robinson, also a Fellow of our Society, was an active structural engineer, who was very active in the Dunedin community. He leaves quite a legacy in Dunedin and across the southern part of New Zealand, as well as his many contributions to NZSEE Study Groups and the Bulletin.

Awards

The NZSEE led awards provide an opportunity to acknowledge and encourage earthquake engineering research and practice. Showcasing outstanding people, projects and papers that contribute to resilience encourages focus on achieving a more resilient Aotearoa. So, I encourage you all to think about nominating award worthy people, projects and papers, see call for nominations later in this newsletter.

~ P Brabhakaran ~



Professor David Johnston Obituary

As you may already know, we recently lost a giant in disaster management—Distinguished Professor David Johnston, who sadly passed away on 19 January. David was a NZSEE fellow since 2019 and a member for more than 30 years.

David was one of the first – if not the first – to bring social science into earthquake engineering, where more were to follow. His contributions, leadership, mentorship and dedication bridged social science, emergency management and engineering. By bringing social science to the fore as a key part of earthquake engineering, David made a unique contribution to the Society.

David played many roles – a father, partner, friend, leader, colleague, hiking buddy, etc – among other, David was the Founder and Director of the Joint Centre for Disaster Research (JCDR) at Massey University, and the Deputy Director of Te Hiranga Rū QuakeCoRE.

Read more about Professor Johnston below:

- [Massey University – Colleagues pay tribute to Distinguished Professor David Johnston](#)
- [QuakeCoRE – Remembering David Johnston](#)
- [NZSEE – Distinguished members , David M Johnston](#)

A public memorial service will be held on Saturday, 15 February, from 2pm to 4pm at the Great Hall on the Pukeahu campus in Wellington. All are welcome. To help with catering and seating, [please RSVP by completing this form](#). Alternatively, please email a.cui1@massey.ac.nz.

Our thoughts are with David's family and the JCDR whānau.



Lou Robinson Obituary

Over his structural engineering career Lou Robinson developed a depth of understanding of how buildings respond dynamically to earthquake effects. This understanding, particularly for unreinforced brick and stone masonry heritage buildings, contributed to NZSEE Study Groups on the assessment of existing buildings. Lou's contribution is reflected in the current assessment guidance and also the designing of limited ductility buildings. He also made a significant contribution to the development of NZS 4203 particularly around his knowledge of advanced analysis techniques. These contributions were acknowledged with his election as a Fellow of the Society.

He established a displaced-based assessment approach to assessing unreinforced masonry buildings that involved advanced analysis techniques that he had developed in-house over many years. Often Lou's assessment outcomes and innovative strengthening solutions differed from those by other engineers due to his focus on meeting the dynamic response requirements for the structural form of heritage buildings and their materials of construction.

Lou is widely acknowledged with saving a number of historic buildings from demolition, and being a protector of the cultural heritage of Dunedin and other southern New Zealand centres.



Reminder: 2025 NZSEE Awards are now Open and Close on 25 February 2025 and 7 March 2025

We invite applications for the prestigious NZSEE annual awards:

- Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award
- NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award
- Otto Glogau award
- NZSEE Research Scholarship
- John Hollings Seismic Resilience in Practice Award

This year, we've made some updates, including increasing the prize value for the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake/NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award and the NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award.

In general, the awards are all independent, and applicants may be nominated to more than one award, provided they qualify for each award.

Applicants for the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake/NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award and NZSEE/QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award are encouraged to evaluate their eligibility for both awards. Submissions can be made for both awards, and this is encouraged if eligibility allows. However, separate submissions are required, and each submission must be tailored to meet the relevant award criteria.

Full details for each award are available on our [website](#).

Please submit your applications directly to the Executive Officer at exec@nzsee.org.nz.

Note

No award may be given for any particular category in any year at the discretion of NZSEE and the Awards Committee. The decisions of the judges are final, and no correspondence will be entered into.





2025 NZSEE CONFERENCE

8–10 April 2025, Cordis Hotel, Auckland

Harnessing Uncertainty

Driving Positive Change for a Sustainable and Resilient Future



Third Keynote Speaker confirmed

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Laurie A. Johnson PhD FAICP
Laurie Johnson Consulting | Research, USA



Laurie Johnson is an internationally recognised urban planner specialising in disaster recovery and catastrophe risk management. For over 35 years, she has combined her unique blend of professional practice and research in earth science, urban planning and public policy to help communities, the insurance industry and other organisations address the complex challenges posed by natural hazards and disasters. Much of her community recovery management and research experience is captured in her book, *After Great Disasters: An In-Depth Analysis of How Six Countries Managed Community Recovery*. She was the 2019-2022 president of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute and 2012-2018 chair of the U.S. Advisory Committee for the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, and currently chairs the Advisory Board for the Global Earthquake Model Foundation. In 2024, she received EERI's Alfred E. Alquist Special Recognition Medal for her extensive work and dedication in improving the seismic safety and resilience of communities around the world.

Sponsorship & Exhibition

Sponsorship packages and exhibition stands are now available to be booked online!

Sponsorship of NZSEE 2025 provides a unique opportunity for your organisation to show your support and raise your profile in the earthquake engineering industry. We invite you to participate in the event as an active partner with a number of different sponsorship packages or exhibition stands to select from.

If you are interested in becoming a Sponsor or Exhibitor at NZSEE 2025, please [click here](#) to request a copy of the Sponsorship & Exhibition Prospectus.



REGISTRATION

Registration is now open!
Early bird deadline: 3 March 2025



Key Dates

Presenters advised programme allocation: **17 March 2025**
Presenter registration deadline: **20 March 2025**

Visit the [2025 NZSEE Conference website](#) for all information and updates.

HE TOHU PŪPŪ SEISMIC DESIGN COMPETITION



The New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering invite you and your colleagues to participate in He Tohu Pūpū, the annual Seismic Design Competition for emerging engineers (undergraduates, postgraduates, and early-career practitioners) to be held at the NZSEE 2025 annual technical conference.

Teams of four will have an opportunity to present and test their structure on a shake table at the conference in April.

Please visit the website for more information and competition rules.

For any questions, or to register your interest, please email the Seismic Design Competition coordinator, Kieran Haymes, at Kieran.haymes@canterbury.ac.nz.



Follow us on LinkedIn

Stay connected with us on LinkedIn for the latest updates, insights, and industry news. Follow us and join the conversation to engage with fellow members and contribute to the growth of our community!

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Collecting feedback on the Seismic Isolation Guidelines

In 2019, NZSEE in conjunction with project partners released the *Guidelines for the Design of Seismic Isolation Systems for Buildings* as a draft for trial use. Having been applied in this form for about five years, NZSEE will shortly commence an exercise to collect and compile feedback on the document, and scope any updates required to finalise it (with a view to then completing this work subject to securing funding). The anticipated release of TS 1170.5 provides some impetus for this work, as does the recent development of the *SESOC Design Guide for Non-linear Response History Analysis* (the *SESOC Design Guide for NLRHA*). The *Isolation Guidelines* would benefit from alignment with both documents. Those with an interest in seismic isolation should look out for further consultation information and feedback forms in your inboxes soon.

Survey on Seismic Assessment Related Training

NZSEE is assisting the Joint Committee for Seismic Assessment and Retrofit (JC-SAR) with strategic inputs into assessment and retrofit related training. This concerns courses and resources that are (or could be) made available by NZSEE, kindred technical societies and other institutions—with a view to enhancing the level of training and support available to assessors, designers, and other professionals that engage with this work. A survey has been distributed to some groups to gather information and insights on current issues and future needs in order to inform a training strategy and a coordinated approach. **Interested members are also encouraged to complete the survey, which can be accessed via the link below.** The survey will remain open until February 21st. All input is greatly appreciated and essential to the entire engineering community.

[View the survey here.](#)

