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LEARNING FROM EARTHQUAKES UPDATE

From the President . . .

Welcome to the February 2026 issue of our newsletter, the first one for 2026.

It has been an active time for the Society early in 2026, with submissions on several new bills introduced in parliament. Also, we have been busy with preparations for the Annual Conference in April 2026.



Submissions on Bills introduced to Parliament

Submissions have included the following bills introduced in parliament:

- Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Bill
- Emergency Management Bill (No 2)
- Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill (replacing the Resource Management Act)

On the Earthquake-prone Buildings bill, the Society collaborated with Engineering New Zealand as well as other technical societies to contribute to a joint submission from Engineering New Zealand as well as prepared and lodged our submission. The Society has now been given an opportunity to present orally at the Select Committee in March 2026.

NZSEE also reviewed the Emergency Management Bill (no2), the Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bills, and contributed to the submissions made by Engineering New Zealand.

Please read the next sections for more on the submissions.

Constitution Review

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 replaced the 1908 Act under which our Society has been operating as an Incorporated Society. The new Act requires all societies to re-register under the new legislation by 5 April 2026. A significant task over the past year has been to review our constitution and amend this to comply with the new Act, as well as make additional changes to ensure the constitution is current given technological changes as well as ensures good governance. A special general meeting was held on 18 February 2026, at which the changes were confirmed by the membership. The Society is in the process of registering the new constitution with the Registrar of Incorporated Societies. The updated constitution can be accessed [here](#).

Annual General Meeting and Management Committee Nominations

Under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022, in the future we would need to hold our Annual General Meetings and submit our financial statements within 6 months of the balance date. Our financial year | balance date being 30 September, we would need to have our AGM before the end of March in the following year. This means not being able to hold the AGMs with the conference if it is held in April. Therefore, we plan to hold the AGMs online,





UPCOMING EVENTS

[SEISMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA ANNUAL MEETING](#)

Pasadena, California

14-18 April 2026

<https://meetings.seismosoc.org/>

[16th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ASIAMN SEISMOLOGICAL COMMISSION](#)

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

25-30 April 2026

<https://asc-iaspei.org/news-and-events/16th-general-assembly-of-asian-seismological-commission-asc-year-2026/>

[13TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING](#)

Portland Oregon

13-17 July 2026

<https://13ncee.eeri.org/>

[NZSEE CONFERENCE 2026](#)

Tākina, Wellington

15-17 April 2026

<https://confer.eventsair.com/nzsee2026/>

[21st International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering](#)

Vienna, Austria

14-19 June 2026

<https://www.icsmg2026.org/en/>

[18th European Conference on Earthquake Engineering](#)

Berlin

14-18 September 2026

<https://ecee2026.eu/>

which would also facilitate participation of members from around New Zealand and wider. This year's AGM is planned to be held online in late April, because of the transition.

I would encourage members to consider contributing to the Society by actively participating in the Management Committee. Nominations close on 2 March 2026.

NZSEE Annual Conference 2026

We are actively making preparations for an exciting conference in April 2026. There is an exciting array of keynote presentations, plenary sessions and papers. We have extended the early bird registration till 13 March to give you more time to register. We look forward to seeing many of you at the conference.

Regards

Brabhakaran
President

Submissions on New Bills

Earthquake Prone Buildings

As you are aware, the Society has been proactively contributing to the government review on *Managing the Earthquake Risk to Existing Buildings*, since 2024. You will recall that Engineering New Zealand, NZSEE and other technical societies sought feedback from members last year, which has helped gather views of members and shape our submissions. The bill was introduced in parliament late last year with submissions closing 16 February 2026. For this bill we have collaborated with Engineering New Zealand and other technical societies, in contributing to a joint submission by Engineering New Zealand, which can be accessed [here](#). In addition, NZSEE (as well as SESOC, NZGS etc.) also prepared and submitted our own submissions. The NZSEE submission can be accessed [here](#).

NZSEE supported the Government's initiation of a review *Managing the risk to Existing Buildings*, and in general the Bill presenting proposed changes to the Earthquake Prone Buildings regime.

We supported:

- The bill providing an efficient and cost-effective pathway to reduce life-safety risk.
- Inclusion of Dunedin and Southland as medium hazard zones, based on the latest science.
- Simpler risk-based identification process for regulatory action.
- Simplified Targeted Retrofit.

We also raised consideration of a number of issues to enhance the proposed regime:

- The life safety risks from earthquake induced geotechnical hazards – landslides.



- Managing significant life safety risks in low hazard areas, especially Auckland.
- Enhancement of the anytime pathway, to allow inclusion of:
 - Buildings with critical vulnerabilities, without being time bound.
 - Larger high occupancy buildings critical vulnerabilities, through systematic screening.
 - Previously incorrectly characterised (as non-earthquake prone) buildings.
- Prioritise retrofit of buildings that serve a critical function in disasters, such as hospitals, emergency centres and schools which also serve as emergency shelters in disasters.
- Limit the change of use easing to EPB s and smaller scale / low occupancy URM's, for particular use categories only.
- Continue to require notices on buildings which have an identified earthquake risk.

We also suggested consideration of some issues in the implementation of the regime:

- Limiting the extension of time to retrofit to 5 years, with extensions on a case-by-case basis.
- Encouraging and facilitating earthquake retrofit, such as through lower interest loans.
- Forming an expert panel to advise on the EPB regime and retrofit.
- Supporting the development and roll-out of adequate guidance and training.
- Recognising that buildings posing an earthquake risk remain outside the EPB regime:
 - Clearly communicating that the EPB system only captures the worst buildings.
 - Supporting the development of an alternative to the %NBS system, to classify buildings based on their risk of damage and resilience in earthquakes.

Emergency Management Bill (No 2)

NZSEE also provided input to the submission of the [Emergency Management Bill](#) lodged by Engineering New Zealand. The submission can be found [here](#).

Some of the key points we raised include:

- Better focus, co-ordination and planning across all 4 R's including Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery, with resources to facilitate attention to these areas.
- Planning for recovery from an early stage during the response phase, so that reduction can focus on betterment, rather than rebuilding vulnerability.
- Better use of technology to help readiness, response and recovery. This was observed as a positive feature in Taiwan from our Learning from Earthquakes study tour in 2024.

Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill

These two bills to replace the Resource Management Act (RMA) were also announced by the government late last year. NZSEE provided comments to Engineering New Zealand for inclusion as part of their submission.

Our comments included:

- The need for collection and dissemination of natural hazard information by local authorities, and this be included in the spatial planning requirements.
- Support for a risk-based management system, with consistency and ensuring that the risk associated with low frequency major consequence hazards are not underestimated.
- Clear settings of levels of risk to ensure consistency in approach.
- Need for focus on resilience (functionality and recovery) in addition to damage and loss of life.
- Ensure that primary production infrastructure is not excluded as these represent critical facilities for our economy.



- Importance of consultation of the technical direction documents and risk | resilience settings prepared by central government, and consultation includes technical societies.

The Engineering New Zealand submission can be access [here](#).



NZSEE 2026 Conference



Preparing for the Big One

Innovating for a New Era of Resilience

2026 NZSEE CONFERENCE

15–17 April 2026

Tākina Wellington Convention Centre



EARLY BIRD DEADLINE EXTENDED

New Deadline: Friday 13 March 2026

Early Bird Deadline: 13 March 2026

The **Early Bird Deadline** for the **2026 NZSEE Annual Technical Conference** has been extended! Register by **Friday, 13 March** to secure the discounted rate.

With this year's theme, "**Preparing for the Big One: Innovating for a New Era of Resilience**", the conference will provide a vital platform for professionals across disciplines to connect, share insights, and explore innovations that strengthen our collective readiness.

Secure your place soon. Full registration details, including fees and inclusions, are available on the [conference website](#).

SPONSORSHIP & EXHIBITION

Request the Prospectus

Sponsorship packages and exhibition stands are now available!

Sponsorship of NZSEE 2026 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.



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If you are interested in becoming a Sponsor or Exhibitor at NZSEE 2026, please contact exec@nzsee.org.nz to request your copy of the sponsorship and exhibition prospectus.

Find out more about Sponsorship & Exhibition Opportunities [here](#).

Conference Program Updates: New Sessions Being Added

We're excited to share that additional conference activities are being added to the website.

Our pre-conference workshops, site visits, and breakfast sessions are gradually going live. While several are already available to view, more will be added in the coming days as details are finalised.

[Visit the Conference website for more information](#)

He Tohu Pūpū Seismic Design Competition

We are pleased to announce that the 5th edition of the He Tohu Pūpū Seismic Design Competition will be held at the 2026 NZSEE Conference in Wellington.

This competition sees teams of young engineers - undergraduates, postgraduates, and/or early-career practitioners - design and build a small-scale earthquake-resistant building that is tested on a shake table during the conference.

You can view the 2026 competition rules [HERE](#).

Requirements for participants include:

- (1) Attending the NZSEE 2026 conference,
- (2) Creating or joining a team of up to 4 people,
- (3) Designing and building a scale building model, and
- (4) Testing your model at the conference.

Teams will have an opportunity at the breakfast session held on the morning of the competition to present their model for 3-5 minutes. This is a chance to pitch the architectural and innovative aspects of the design to score more points.

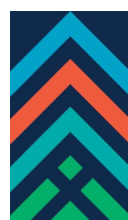
The first placed team will win a cash prize to be shared amongst team members, plus one year of complimentary membership to NZSEE for each team member. Further details to follow.

To sign up your team, please provide all team names and affiliations by email to Natalie Morrison (natalie.morrison@holmesgroup.com). Queries may also be sent to this address.

We look forward to hearing from this year's passionate young engineers,

He Tohu Pūpū Seismic Design Competition Committee 2026

Supported by
Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake



**Natural Hazards
Commission**
Toka Tū Ake



NZSEE Management Committee Call for Nominations 2026-27

NZSEE invites nominations for the 2026-27 Management Committee. Each year, Society members elect nine of their peers to serve on the Management Committee. Current members of the committee can be nominated for re-election provided they remain eligible to be on the committee.

More information (Clause 6) can be found on the [NZSEE constitution](#).

Nominations shall be submitted on the official nomination form (available [here](#)), shall be signed by the candidate, the proposer and seconder, all of whom shall be financial members of the Society and have been members for at least one year.

The completed Nomination Form shall reach the Executive Officer no later than **Monday, 2 March 2026**.

For more information, or to email in a completed Nomination form, please contact the Executive Officer on exec@nzsee.org.nz

2026 NZSEE Awards are Now Open

We invite applications for the prestigious NZSEE annual awards.

A summary of each award along with links to the detailed criteria are provided below.

In general, the awards are all independent, and applicants may be nominated to more than one award, provided they qualify for each award. In particular, note that applicants can apply to both the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award and NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award, and are encouraged to evaluate their eligibility for both awards. Submissions can be made for both awards, and this is encouraged if eligibility allows. However, completely separate submissions are required, and each submission must be tailored to meet the relevant award criteria.

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.

Awards include:

Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award

The Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award is open to practitioners and researchers contributing to reducing the impacts of earthquakes on New Zealand communities, and individuals from disciplines beyond engineering who are making significant contributions to earthquake impact reduction in New Zealand.

The Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award includes a prize of \$15,000.

For more information and application details, please click [here](#).

Applications close 11:59 pm Monday, 2 March 2026, with no extensions beyond this final deadline.

NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award

The NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award recognises and celebrates younger women from engineering practice and/or academia who demonstrate emerging leadership in the field of earthquake engineering.



This award aims to foster greater participation of women in leadership roles within the discipline. Recipients are awarded a \$15,000 prize to support their career development and goals in earthquake engineering.

For more information and for details on how to apply please click [here](#).

Applications close 11:59 pm Monday, 2 March 2026, with no extensions beyond this final deadline.

John Hollings Seismic Resilience in Practice Award

The John Hollings Seismic Resilience in Practice award recognises case study projects from practice that have the objective of providing enhanced seismic resilience in an earthquake. Submitted projects may be new builds or seismic retrofits and can be a building, structure, or infrastructure.

For more information and details on how to apply please click [here](#).

Applications close 11:59 pm Monday, 2 March 2026, with no extensions beyond this final deadline.

Otto Glogau Award

This annual award recognises the author(s) of the best paper published in the NZSEE Bulletin during the three years leading up to 31 December of the year prior to the award being made. Eligibility is open to all authors, members or non-members of the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering, whose papers were published in the Bulletin within the specified timeframe.

Nominations for papers meeting the eligibility can include self-nomination.

The award includes \$2,000, which may be used to purchase books or support other activities that advance earthquake engineering initiatives.

For more information and details on how to nominate an eligible Bulletin paper, click [here](#).

Applications close 11:59 pm Monday, 2 March 2026, with no extensions beyond this final deadline.

NZSEE Research Scholarship

The New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering awards an annual Research Scholarship to support students undertaking research projects in earthquake engineering at New Zealand universities and research institutes.

The scholarship objective is to promote research in earthquake engineering and encourage students of high ability to pursue advanced studies in earthquake engineering.

The 2026 NZSEE Scholarship will have a value of \$10,000.

For more information and for details on how to apply please click [here](#).

Applications close 11:59 pm Monday, 2 March 2026, with no extensions beyond this final deadline.

NZSEE Seminars and Webinars

On 11 February NZSEE hosted an engaging discussion on intersection of risk, reliability and resilience presented by Liz Varga.

The conversation continued well beyond the session itself, including exploring how we might take more of a systems approach and what the benefits could be, growing interest in digital infrastructure, and how we tackle the challenge of “silent success” - where the outcome of earthquake resilience is often a lack of visible impacts.

If you missed the session, the recording is available [here](#).



15 Years Since the 22 February 2011 Earthquake

Fifteen years have passed since the devastating earthquake that struck Christchurch at 12:51 p.m. on 22 February 2011. The event claimed 185 lives, injured many others, and left a profound and lasting impact on families, the city, and the nation.

This anniversary is a time to remember those who were lost, to acknowledge the courage and dedication of first responders and residents, and to reflect on how deeply the earthquake reshaped Canterbury — and the engineering profession in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Today, Christchurch stands as a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of its community, and of its determination to rebuild stronger than before. We also recognise the pivotal role played by the engineering community during the immediate response and throughout the recovery, which continues today. Thank you to all our members who have contributed to this ongoing work.

This anniversary gives us the opportunity to honour the past, acknowledge the lessons learned, and reaffirm our commitment to building a safer, more resilient Aotearoa New Zealand.

At our upcoming NZSEE Technical Conference in April, a special session will be held to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Canterbury Earthquakes. We warmly invite all members attending the conference to take part in this important session.

Please follow the links below for related bulletin and news articles marking the 15th anniversary:

[Vol. 44 No. 4 \(2011\): Special Issue on the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake | Bulletin of the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering](#)

[The impact of the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence on the earthquake engineering profession in New Zealand | Bulletin of the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering](#)

[Impact story: Shaking up earthquake modelling and engineering](#)

[How the Christchurch earthquakes shook up all of New Zealand | The Press](#)

Learning from Earthquakes Update

There have been no significant events of interest for New Zealand since the last newsletter (See extract below). The LFE subcommittee continues to monitor seismic events and their impacts to assess its relevance for New Zealand.

| Magnitude | Location/Description | Date and Time (UTC) | Depth (km) |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 7.1 | 55 km NNW of Kota Belud, Malaysia | 2026-02-22 16:57:46 | 619.8 |
| 6.4 | 53 km WNW of Port-Olry, Vanuatu | 2026-02-14 02:27:37 | 10 |
| 6.2 | 32 km SW of Ovalle, Chile | 2026-02-12 13:34:31 | 36.9 |
| 5.5 | 8 km SE of Dianga, China | 2026-01-26 06:56:02 | 10 |
| 6 | Off the coast of Oregon | 2026-01-16 03:25:52 | 10 |
| 6.4 | 247 km SE of Sarangani, Philippines | 2026-01-10 14:58:23 | 31 |
| 6.4 | 35 km E of Santiago, Philippines | 2026-01-07 03:02:53 | 22 |
| 6.5 | 5 km WNW of Rancho Viejo, Mexico | 2026-01-02 13:58:16 | 18 |



| | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------|------|
| 6.2 | 40 km W of Puerto Santa, Peru | 2025-12-28 02:51:49 | 58 |
| 6.6 | 29 km ESE of Yilan, Taiwan | 2025-12-27 15:05:55 | 63 |
| 6 | 2025 Taitung, Taiwan Earthquake | 2025-12-24 09:47:06 | 8 |
| 6.5 | 45 km NNE of Goroka, Papua New Guinea | 2025-12-22 10:31:27 | 107 |
| 6.7 | 111 km NE of Kuji, Japan | 2025-12-12 02:44:12 | 19 |
| 6.6 | 129 km S of Honchō, Japan | 2025-12-08 21:52:41 | 19 |
| 7.6 | 2025 Aomori Prefecture, Japan Earthquake | 2025-12-08 14:15:10 | 45.4 |
| 7 | 2025 Hubbard Glacier Earthquake | 2025-12-06 20:41:51 | 17 |
| 5.8 | 136 km NNW of Tumxuk, China | 2025-12-04 07:44:06 | 9 |

The LFE Subcommittee is currently finishing an update of the field manual for future missions with substantial changes in which the programme is carried out.

During the upcoming Technical Conference in April, a Rapid Building Assessment training workshop ([NZSEE 2026](#)) will be held on Tuesday 14 April at Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre.

We encourage all members who wish to be part of the LFE programme to attend this training if they have not already completed it.

