nzsee
NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY FOR EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING

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Kia ora,

Welcome to the November newsletter. It's a busy month, with events running right through to the end of the year.

Registrations are open for MBIE's in-person sessions on the upcoming earthquake-prone building changes, with Ken Elwood and Andrew Thompson, in Wellington (11 November), Dunedin (18 November) and Christchurch (19 November), and MBIE's final public overview webinar is online on Thursday 12 November, 11am–12pm. The in-person sessions are a chance to work through examples and ask detailed questions directly of the team working on the changes, so register soon.

This month marks ten years since the 2016 Kaikōura Earthquake. Join our webinar on Tuesday 17 November (12:00–1:00pm), where leading practitioners and researchers look back at what the earthquake revealed and how New Zealand has responded.

A reminder that nominations for NZSEE Fellows 2027 close this Friday, 13 November, at 12pm, and nominations for the 2027 Awards close on 30 November. If you know someone whose contribution deserves recognition, now is the time to nominate them.

We're also delighted to congratulate Professor Charles Clifton on being awarded the 2026 Pickering Medal.

You'll also find details of Stefano Pampanin's upcoming seminars, our Non-Structural Elements seminar series, the PCEE 2027 Seismic Design Competition, and an important update on the Residential Design Roadmap for CPEng engineers.

Upcoming events

Date	Event	Location
12 Nov and 23 Nov	A Step-Change (Inter)National Plan for the Integrated Seismic-Energy Rehabilitation of the Building Stock to Enhance Community Resilience and Sustainability – A Kiwitalian approach	Auckland, Wellington Christchurch details coming soon
17 Nov	Ten Years On: Lessons from the 2016 Kaikōura Earthquake	Online
24 Nov to 4 Dec	Non-Structural Elements seminars	Christchurch, Dunedin, Auckland, Taupō, Wellington
15 to 18 Feb 2027	PCEE 2027 Workshops and site tours 15 Feb, conference 16–18 Feb	Te Pae, Christchurch

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN ROADMAP

Other events of interest

Date	Event	Location
12 Nov	MBIE webinar: overview of the Earthquake-prone Building System changes	Online
11 Nov, 18 Nov, 19 Nov	Get ready for the earthquake-prone building changes	Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch

Register: Get ready for the earthquake-prone building changes

Join Ken Elwood and Andrew Thompson to discuss the upcoming earthquake-prone building changes and what they may mean for the engineering practice.

This session hosted by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will cover content from the webinars and give you the chance to move beyond the overview and ask detailed questions directly of the team working on the changes. Ken and Andrew will work through a range of examples and explore the new approaches to:

- Unreinforced masonry buildings, including how their size and location will affect how they are managed
- Tall buildings constructed from heavy materials (e.g. concrete), including how High-Risk Deficiencies will be identified and managed.

Dates and locations:
-Wednesday 11 November | 10am–1pm | Victoria University, Wellington
-Wednesday 18 November | 1:30–4:30pm | Otago University, Dunedin
-Thursday 19 November | 1:30–4:30pm | University of Canterbury, Christchurch

About Ken Elwood
Ken Elwood, Professor at University of Auckland, currently serves as Chief Engineer (Building Resilience) for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Natural Hazards Commission. He is involved in research and provides policy advice in relation to the seismic risk of existing buildings and design of new buildings.

About Andrew Thompson
Andrew is a Technical Director at Holmes, and one of the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering's representatives on the Joint Committee for Seismic Assessment and Retrofit. He has been involved alongside a team of contributors assisting MBIE with technical aspects of the earthquake-prone building system reforms.

Complete your registration here.

NZSEE Fellows 2027: Call for Nominations – closing Friday!

The Management Committee is calling for nominations for election as NZSEE Fellows, recognising members who are highly respected in earthquake engineering and have given exceptional service to the Society.

Closing date: Friday, 13 November 2026, 12pm

Nominees must have been an Ordinary Member for at least five years. Nominations must be made by three current financial members, using the completed nomination form, including a brief supporting statement.

Send completed nominations to exec@nzsee.org.nz

View the eligibility criteria and download the nomination form

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NZSEE Awards 2027: Call for Nominations

All awards close 11:59pm Monday, 30 November 2026, with no extensions.

You can apply or be nominated for more than one award, but each needs a separate submission tailored to its criteria. This is particularly encouraged for the Ivan Skinner Award and the Emerging Women Leaders Award, so check your eligibility for both.

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

Note: NZSEE and the Awards Committee may choose not to give an award in any category in any year. The judges' decisions are final.

The awards:

Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake / NZSEE Ivan Skinner Award ($15,000 prize)
Ivan Skinner Award criteria and how to apply

Natural Hazards Commission
Toka Tū Ake

NZSEE / QuakeCoRE Emerging Women Leaders in Earthquake Engineering Award ($15,000 prize)
Emerging Women Leaders Award criteria and how to apply

QuakeCoRE
NZ Centre for Earthquake Resilience
Te Hiranga Rū

John Hollings Seismic Resilience in Practice Award
John Hollings Award criteria and how to apply

Otto Glogau Award ($2,000 prize)
Otto Glogau Award criteria and how to nominate a paper

NZSEE Research Scholarship ($10,000)
Research Scholarship criteria and how to apply

Non-Structural Elements: From Research to Real-World Design

Seminar Series 2026

Join us for a paid seminar (member and non-member rates available) on the seismic behaviour and design of non-structural elements, including how to apply the new BRANZ Code of Practice on current projects.

Non-structural elements are critical to life safety, building functionality and seismic resilience. Recent research, full-scale testing and earthquake observations are changing how they should be designed, coordinated and reviewed. The seminar covers earthquake reconnaissance, the new Code of Practice, emerging research and testing, and practical design, coordination and documentation.

Location	Date	Time	Venue
Christchurch	24 Nov	1:00–4:00pm	University of Canterbury, John Britten 102 Conference foyer
Dunedin	25 Nov	1:00–4:00pm	WSP Dunedin, 197 Rattray Street
Auckland	1 Dec	9:00am–12:00pm	University of Auckland, Newmarket Campus
Taupō	2 Dec	1:00–4:00pm	WSP Taupō, 80 Tūwharetoa Street
Wellington	4 Dec	9:00am–12:00pm	Massey University, 50 Tasman Street, Mount Cook

Find out more and register for the seminar

Pacific Conference on Earthquake Engineering 2027



Early bird registration closes 15 January 2027.

To register at the member rate, you need to be an NZSEE member (Ordinary, Fellow, Life, Young Professional or Student). Not a member yet? Join NZSEE to get discounted conference registration, along with a number of other member benefits. Register here.

He Tohu Pūpū – Seismic Design Competition



The New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering presents **He Tohu Pūpū,** the annual Seismic Design Competition for emerging engineers (undergraduates, postgraduates, and early-career practitioners), to be held as part of the PCEE 2027 conference.

Teams of four to six members, all aged under 30, will design and build a structural model within prescribed material constraints.

Designs will be assessed on architectural and structural innovation before being tested on a unidirectional shaking table during the conference.

The first **ten** teams to complete registration will secure a place in the competition.

Register your interest and find out more here.

Supported by

Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake

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NZSEE Events

Upcoming Seminar: A Step-Change (Inter)National Plan for the Integrated Seismic-Energy Rehabilitation of the Building Stock to Enhance Community Resilience and Sustainability – A Kiwitalian approach

Speaker: Stefano Pampanin

The urgency of a comprehensive and coordinated (inter)national plan for an “integrated” multi-performance rehabilitation of the existing building stock, able to combine architectural, functional, energy aspects and societal needs, while targeting a substantial improvement of structural and seismic safety, reducing the dramatic socio-economic-environmental impacts associated to earthquake events, is increasingly evident.

On the other hand, the severe mismatch between societal expectations over the reality of seismic performance of modern buildings has confirmed the need for a paradigm shift in performance-based design criteria and objective towards damage-control or low-damage design philosophy and technologies.

The presentation intends to provide an overview, based on extensive experience at national and international level, of recent significant advances and unique opportunities to enhance the community resilience and sustainability, based on the developments and implementation of either:

a. next generation technologies for an integrated (structural skeleton + envelope + foundation system) resilient low-damage building systems, moving towards the concept of an “earthquake proof building” and

b. unique proactive socio-economic/financial policies to sustain national-wide long-term programs for the integrated seismic-energy efficiency rehabilitation of the whole building stock.

To achieve this challenging and, at the same time, urgent goal, a paradigm shift is needed, relying on the synergic multi-disciplinary contribution of various stakeholders and shareholders. Equally important should be a dedicated effort to improve the communication to the non-technical audience, raise awareness in terms of overall impacts, risks and available solutions in order to co-create feasible pathways.

Auckland

When: Thursday, 12 November 2026

Time: 5:30pm Networking | 6:00pm Presentation

Where: AUT City Campus, 2 Governor Fitzroy Place, Auckland 1010

Find out more and register here.

Wellington

When: Monday, 23 November 2026

Time: 5:30pm Networking | 6:00pm Presentation

Where: WSP Wellington Office, Level 9, 100 Willis Street, Majestic Centre, Wellington

Find out more and register here.

Christchurch

Details coming soon.

Upcoming Webinar: Ten Years On: Lessons from the 2016 Kaikōura Earthquake

Speakers: Brabha Brabhaharan, Professor Brendon Bradley, Liam Witherspoon, Professor Tom Wilson, Paul Campbell

Just after midnight on 14 November 2016, the M7.8 Kaikōura Earthquake struck the upper South Island. It was one of the most complex earthquakes ever recorded, with more than 20 faults rupturing in sequence. It caused widespread landsliding, coastal uplift and severe damage to State Highway 1 and the Main North Line, cutting Kaikōura off by land. Its effects reached far beyond the epicentre: strong long-period shaking in Wellington exposed weaknesses in modern multi-storey buildings and port infrastructure.

Ten years on, this webinar brings together leading practitioners and researchers to look back at what the earthquake revealed and how New Zealand has responded. Presenters will cover:

- the ground motions and why the earthquake was so complex

- the lessons for infrastructure resilience, including landslide impacts on transport networks and how they recovered
- emergency management, community resilience and the wider effects on society

Each presentation will look at how these lessons have shaped design, assessment, guidance and recovery planning over the past decade, and what remains unresolved.

When: Tuesday 17 November

Time: 12:00 – 1:00pm

Where: Online

Find out more and register here.

Past Seminar: 2026 Venezuela and Colombia Earthquake Reconnaissance Update – Christchurch | Wellington | Online

Speakers: Julian Rincon and Santiago Pujol

Recording available online. View the recording here.

2026 Research Honours Aotearoa recipient Charles Clifton



Pickering Medal
Presented by Royal Society Te Apārangi for innovation and excellence in technology that has generated significant impact and commercial success both nationally and internationally.

Congratulations to Professor Charles Clifton CNZM FRSNZ (Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland), who has been awarded the Pickering Medal for his work making structural steel a safe, durable choice for multistorey buildings.

Read more about the Pickering Medal here.

Learn more about the 2026 Research Honours Aotearoa recipients and their achievements here.

Residential Design Roadmap

A recent ***Residential Design Roadmap*** report raises important issues for residential structural and geotechnical engineering practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

CPEng engineers should read the report, understand the issues it identifies and consider if and how they may apply to their current practice, especially structural or geotechnical engineers working in residential design.

The report highlights inconsistencies in some approaches to residential structural design, particularly where Specific Engineering Design and NZS3604 is used across two- and three-storey timber framed townhouses. It also identifies areas where existing standards, guidance and compliance pathways may not provide enough clarity about how modern residential buildings should be designed.

While further work is needed to understand the scale and significance of these issues, the findings are important for CPEng engineers to understand and consider as part of maintaining good professional practice.

The report was commissioned by the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake.

Some **guidance** is already available in response to this report, including interim **P21 guidance** and a **Residential Design Seminar**. Further guidance and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities are also being considered in response to the issues raised. More information will be shared as this work develops.