



International Federation
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A review of legislative changes in disasters: The New Zealand case

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Abstract

There is a strong positive relationship between building and environmental legislation and recovery activities after disaster events. The pace of recovery is influenced by legislation and changes to legislation are very often required to cater for practical realities of recovery in disasters. A lot can be learned from these relationships as countries seek reduced vulnerabilities to disasters that they are exposed to.

This study undertakes a review of legislative changes that took place during the Canterbury earthquakes (case study event) in New Zealand.

A content analysis approach is adopted to the review of recovery reports, to determine changes to building and environmental legislation necessitated by the earthquake. This approach is complemented with some personal interviews with disaster management practitioners, to provide better understanding of the rationale for the identified legislative changes in New Zealand.

From the analysis, the study suggests key areas of legislation that disaster management agencies could focus on in their reduction and readiness planning activities. It is anticipated that disaster management agencies could benefit from a reflective approach to real time disaster events (as determined from this study) and consequently become more proactive.

Keywords: Legislation, Reconstruction, Disasters, New Zealand

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