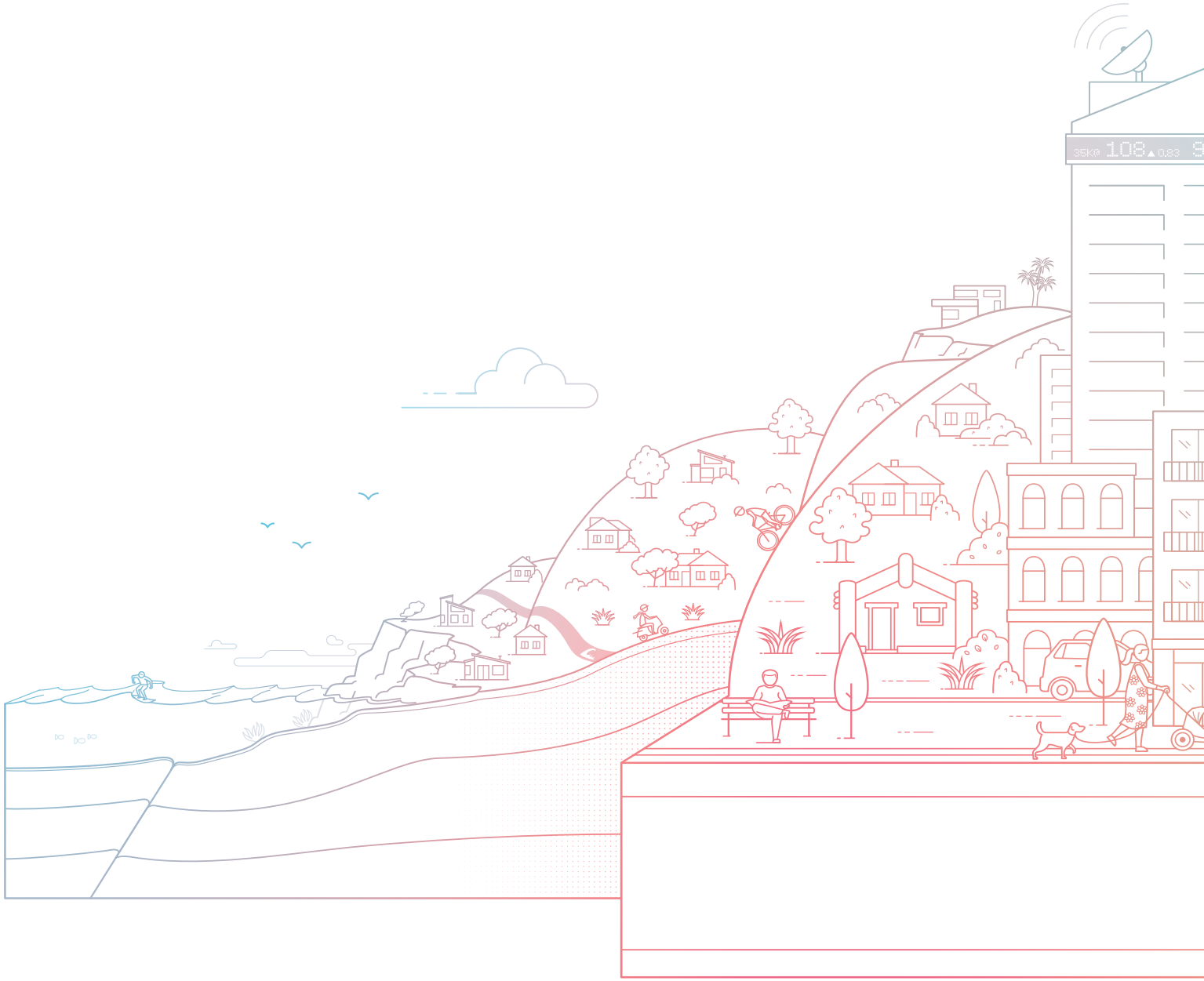
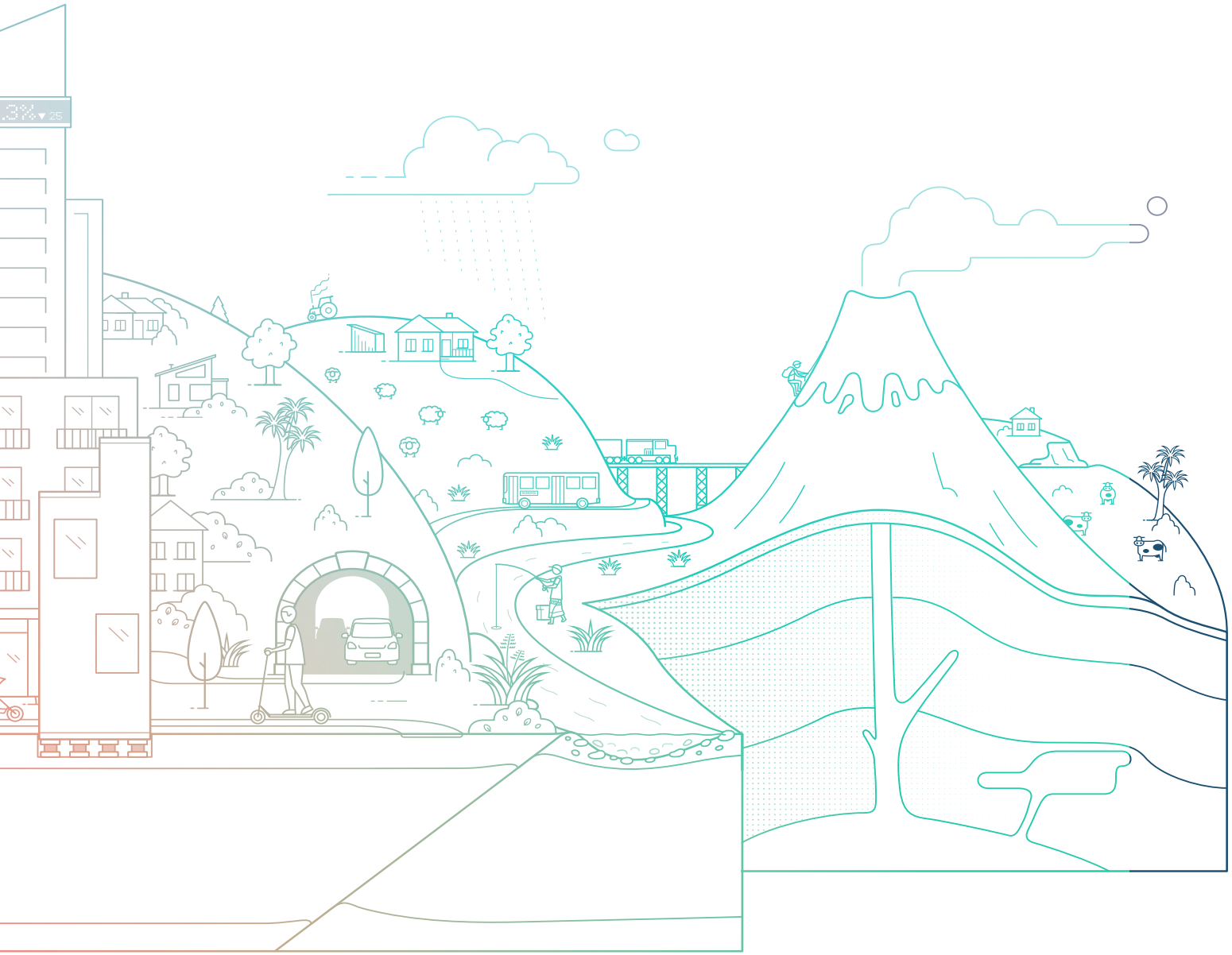
Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake

Resilience Highlights Report

2025

Natural Hazards Commission
Toka Tū Ake





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Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake

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Welcome to our 2025 Resilience Highlights Report

Foreword from our Chief Executive

At the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake, our mission goes beyond insurance. We are there to provide financial support for households when they face damage after natural hazard events, but we also invest in research, risk reduction, public education and strategic readiness to help reduce damage before it occurs.

This report highlights the impact we make through our Resilience activities - strengthening evidence, supporting better decisions, and building long-term community resilience. As we all adapt to increasing risk, it is even more important that we understand it and look for ways to reduce it proactively. The leadership and impact showcased here speak to the dedication of our team, and I hope you find this report as enjoyable to read as we did to put together.

Tina Mitchell
Chief Executive | Te Tumu Whakarae

Foreword from our Chief Resilience Officer

Each year, pulling together this report reminds me just how proud I am of our team's work and the impact we have across Aotearoa. With so many projects underway, it's always a challenge to choose which stories to share. I hope the highlights here spark your interest and show the breadth of our efforts – from hazard modelling and engineering guidance to building partnerships and educational programmes.

I'm excited for you to learn more about the work we're doing to improve our country's resilience to natural hazards. If you'd like to work together or have any questions about what you read here, get in touch with us by emailing research@naturalhazards.govt.nz.

Dr Jo Horrocks
Chief Resilience Officer | Pouārahi Manawaroa

Resilience at NHC Toka Tū Ake

We take a proactive approach to reducing the impact of natural hazards on New Zealand's people, property and communities.

Investing in resilience

We are one of the only insurers in the world that also invests directly in understanding and preparing for the natural hazards we insure against. This dual role – covering risk and reducing it – places us in a unique position. It means our work not only helps New Zealanders recover from natural hazard events, but also helps reduce the risk of those events becoming disasters in the first place.

Our investment in resilience strengthens New Zealand's ability to secure reinsurance (essentially, insurance for insurers). Reinsurers want confidence that we understand our risks and are actively working to reduce them. By funding research, supporting risk reduction initiatives, and facilitating learning about natural hazard preparedness, we demonstrate that we are serious about managing our exposure and vulnerability. This helps keep natural hazards insurance affordable and accessible for New Zealanders.

In 2025, we secured a record $10.3 billion of natural hazards reinsurance to help protect homeowners against the impact of events that deplete the amount we have stored up in the Natural Hazard Fund.

> "International markets value our scheme's commitment to community resilience. By funding science and research, then translating that into insights that can be used by decision-makers, we are supporting better building standards, decisions on where new homes are built and government planning.
>
> **Tina Mitchell,** Chief Executive

How we translate science into action

Resilience at the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake (NHC) is delivered through four interconnected teams. Our approach ensures science informs awareness, and awareness leads to action.

Natalie Balfour, Head of Research

“Our research investment builds the evidence base to understand hazards, quantify risk, and identify ways to reduce impacts. Our funding supports smarter land use, more resilient buildings, and better decision-making across government, industry, and communities.

Sarah-Jayne McCurrach, Head of Risk Reduction

“We translate data and information into action. The Risk Reduction team works to influence policy, planning and enable risk-based decision-making at all governance levels.

Hamish Armstrong, Public Education Manager

“Public Education connects with New Zealanders to raise awareness, inspire action, and build a culture of preparedness. Through campaigns, partnerships, and community engagement, we help people understand their risks and take steps to reduce them.

Bruno Butler, Head of Strategic Readiness

“Readiness focuses on ensuring NHC is prepared to respond to natural hazard events and support recovery in ways that align with our resilience goals. It’s NHC’s newest Resilience function, established in 2025.

We are led by strategy

In 2025, we released updated strategies for our Research, Risk Reduction, and Public Education functions. These strategies set out our goals, priorities, and principles for the next five years, and are aligned with our overarching Resilience Strategy for Natural Hazard Risk Reduction. You can read our strategies on our website.

Q&A with Jo Horrocks

Chief Resilience Officer

Why is investing in resilience a priority for NHC?

Investing in resilience means we can prevent damage before it happens, reducing losses and speeding up recovery for communities. It keeps the scheme affordable for levy payers by lowering future costs and claims. Ultimately, it's about being prepared and reducing impacts, not just responding after disasters.

What work from the past year [2025] are you most proud of?

I'm proud of how we set a clear, evidence-based direction with refreshed strategies, then put those into practice. We strengthened research, improved risk reduction advice, and delivered public education, ensuring our efforts made a real difference for New Zealanders facing natural hazards.

What are you most looking forward to in 2026?

I'm looking forward to building stronger partnerships across government, insurance, and communities. Collaborating means better outcomes for everyone. We'll also contribute to key policy reforms and support climate adaptation, helping households and decision-makers plan for changing risks with practical tools and evidence.


ANZ
brother

Our year at a glance

Active research projects
73

Dollars invested in research
10 million

Plays on NHC videos
3,949,327

Visits to Be Prepared website
76,214

Researchers supported
77

Monthly visits to Natural Hazards Portal
10,420

Submissions on council/government plans
20

Guidance documents released
5

Homebuyers considering natural hazard risk
87%

Understanding hazard and risk

We use data and modelling to better understand New Zealand's natural hazards by measuring their size, frequency and impact. We make sure this information is readily accessible to decision-makers, whether in policy, planning, practice, or the public.

Seeing the whole picture

New Zealand already has a National Seismic Hazard Model, which helps us understand where and how strongly the ground might shake in earthquakes. In 2025, we made progress towards a consistent, nationwide understanding of risk from New Zealand's other major hazards.

The National Tsunami Model, developed by Earth Sciences NZ and other New Zealand experts, completed its first phase using Wellington as a case study. We're now starting the second phase, which will seek to expand the model nationwide.

We also progressed toward launching the National Liquefaction Model, showing where liquefaction is most likely to occur across the country. Liquefaction caused over half the financial losses in the Canterbury earthquakes, so this model can help planners and engineers reduce future risk.

Work continued on the National Volcano Model, which will estimate building damage from volcanic ashfall and eventually include hazards like lahars and pyroclastic flows.

Together, these models give a robust foundation for understanding and preparing for our natural hazards.

Scenarios shape safer futures

Natural hazard scenarios incorporate scientific, technical and community knowledge to demonstrate how credible natural hazards and their impacts may occur. Scenarios are often presented as a series of different versions of plausible, future events – for example, different possibilities for climate change in the future, or different magnitude earthquake events.

We develop scenarios to better understand potential risks, plan for recovery and strengthen resilience. Drawing on our own data and loss modelling, as well as the latest science (including research we've funded), scenarios help us better understand exposure. Scenarios are also useful to insurers, private organisations, researchers and government agencies for decision-making and training.

This year, we've begun developing community-focused scenarios. Instead of focusing on a single natural hazard, like an earthquake on the Alpine Fault, these scenarios imagine fictitious communities with defined attributes – such as location, risk exposure and demographics. This approach helps test how communities might respond under certain conditions and supports pre-event planning for more effective resilience strategies.

Looking ahead, we want to make scenarios more accessible by integrating them into the Natural Hazards Portal – giving a glimpse into "what if" situations that can help illustrate potential impacts and why preparedness matters.

Growing risk-aware Kiwis

Growing up in one of the riskiest places on Earth for natural hazards means getting familiar with the forces that shape our land from a young age.

In 2025, we supported several initiatives that make understanding and preparing for natural hazards easier for young people – and a little bit fun, too:

- **Shockwave** – a Shake House at MTG Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri, which lets visitors experience what a real earthquake feels like – without the risk.
- **Rūaumoko: Restless Land** – a touring exhibit resulting from our long-term partnership with Te Papa. In its first year, the exhibit has visited eight communities across the country.
- **LEARNZ Virtual Field Trip** – an immersive online experience that lets kids explore the wonders of the Bay of Plenty region – shaped by fault lines, volcanoes and floods – from the comfort of their classroom.
- **NZ Natural Hazard Teaching Resources** – an online hub of fun, interactive activities that help kids at every age learn about New Zealand's natural hazards. Developed by teachers, for teachers, it's a great resource for sparking ideas for activities that will resonate with classrooms around the country.

All the resources we support are free and developed by experts.

What's next for the Natural Hazards Portal?

Over 85,000 people used our Natural Hazards Portal in 2025 to access information about properties and natural hazards. This year's improvements to the Portal focused on ensuring the accuracy of underlying data, resolving web accessibility issues, and enhancing the address service to deliver a more reliable property search.

Development of Phase 2 of the Natural Hazards Portal started in late 2025. This includes building a new platform for the site with increased functionality. It may also include displaying natural hazard maps and showing scenarios that are likely to occur in New Zealand, for example, a magnitude 8 Alpine Fault earthquake. The new Portal will be released mid-2026 and other features and new functionality will be built into the Portal over time.

Preparing for the unexpected

New NHC-funded research from Dr Luke Harrington's team at the University of Waikato is showing that, when it comes to extreme weather events, we should expect the unexpected.

A new paper in *Environmental Research: Climate* by Harrington's PhD student, Fikri Sigid, examined more than a century of rainfall records across New Zealand.

The study found no clear trends in the frequency of extreme rainfall. Rather, some parts of the country experienced clusters of extreme events while others were "statistically lucky" with few or no extremes.

Time and again, Sigid found examples of events that should have been impossible based on historical data – and yet, they occurred.

Harrington's team is showing that recent data alone can't predict future risk – long -term records and advanced modelling are key to capturing the full range of possible futures.

What's coming up in 2026 under this theme:

- We're funding Phase 2 of the National Tsunami Model to better understand tsunami risk in several high-risk areas around New Zealand.
- A new NHC-funded model of ash damage to help New Zealand better prepare for future eruptions, developed by Dr Josh Hayes (Earth Sciences NZ).
- We're releasing the Natural Hazards Intelligence Action Plan, which sets out how we'll grow and use the data and information we hold or fund to improve resilience.
- We're publishing a new Climate Action Plan, which will bring together existing work and target new ways we can prepare for natural hazard risks shaped by climate change.

Stronger homes

Stronger homes make for more resilient communities. Our work helps engineers, architects and builders to design and construct buildings that can better withstand natural hazards.

Setting expectations

NHC-funded research led by Dr Catalina Miranda from Massey University's Joint Centre for Disaster Research explored how homeowners in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington perceive the seismic performance of timber-framed houses. The research showed that most homeowners expect their houses to perform better than the minimum life-safety standard reflected in the Building Code. While many homeowners believe strengthening their house will help, few have taken action - often because of cost concerns, lack of clear guidance, or uncertainty about what to do.

This study builds on another major NHC-funded study from the New Zealand Society of Earthquake Engineering (Resilient Buildings Project, 2024), which explored how New Zealanders want buildings to perform during and after earthquakes and found similar themes.

Insights from studies like these show that resilience matters to New Zealanders, and many of us expect our homes to outperform code minimum standards.

Building for tomorrow

We're investing in resources that make it easier for the building industry to build new homes that perform above code minimum.

A major milestone this year was the release of Volumes 2 and 3 of the Low Damage Seismic Design (LDSD) Guidance. Developed in partnership with the Structural Engineering Society of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), and industry experts, this guidance helps engineers and builders design new buildings that are less likely to suffer damage in earthquakes – reducing downtime, repair costs and disruption in the long run.

LDSD is voluntary but increasingly adopted by people seeking long-term resilience and functionality – values that align with community expectations.

Research we have invested in has also informed TS 1170.5, the newly updated national standard for seismic design, which now reflects the latest seismic hazard data and design thinking for New Zealand.

And through the Design.Resilience.NZ website, we continue to provide a central hub for above-code guidance, including the LDSD. Launched in 2024, the site brings together tools, case studies and technical resources to help practitioners design buildings that perform better in earthquakes.

Training boost for builders

Another way we've supported the building industry with resilient design this year is through two new online modules, developed in partnership with BRANZ, MBIE and the building sector.

These modules provide practical guidance for builders on retrofitting existing homes and ensuring new builds meet seismic safety standards, drawing on lessons from the Christchurch and Kaikōura earthquakes and the latest BRANZ research.

Builders can access the modules on mobile devices, complete them at their own pace, and refer back to content as needed.

For licensed building practitioners, each module counts towards ongoing professional development.

By bundling resilience upgrades into renovation work and identifying risks early, builders can help protect families and homes, making New Zealand's housing stock safer and stronger against future earthquakes. The modules are available now on the Building Performance learning portal: learning.building.govt.nz.

Spend now, save later?

Research is showing that resilient buildings may cost more upfront, but they pay off in reduced disruption, lower emissions, and long-term savings.

Two NHC-funded studies are helping quantify the true cost of building above code, whether measured in carbon or dollars.

One study led by the University of Auckland's Dr Charlotte Toma looked at medium-density housing and found that buildings designed for low damage in high-hazard earthquake zones can significantly reduce lifetime carbon emissions.

By comparing reinforced concrete walls and steel-framed buildings across different seismic zones, researchers showed that resilient designs – especially in high-risk areas – can cut carbon losses from repairs and demolition by up to 50%.

Dr Alex Shegay, also from the University of Auckland, is investigating the economic cost of base isolation, a technique that allows buildings to move independently of ground shaking. While base-isolated buildings cost more upfront, early results show they become cost-effective within 10–15 years, thanks to reduced earthquake damage and lower repair costs. This is good news for the growing number of building owners who are already investing in base-isolated buildings.

Together, these studies suggest that investing in resilience pays off, not just in safety and performance, but in long-term environmental and financial savings.

Safer homes, one chimney at a time

What do a dairy cow, great white shark, and sea lion have in common? They all weigh about the same as an old brick chimney – and can do a lot of damage if they fall through your roof.

This message was one part of a targeted campaign we ran this year to encourage Kiwis to take down their old brick or concrete masonry chimneys.

The campaign kicked off with filming a real-life chimney takedown in a Wellington home, which received nearly a million views.

We also challenged our Facebook audience to guess the weight of the removed chimney, to get people thinking about how heavy brick chimneys can be. We received 940 entries – with three people guessing within 0.5 kg of the actual weight of 747.5 kg!

What's behind this campaign? Brick and concrete chimneys can be seriously dangerous in an earthquake, so removing them is a tangible way Kiwis can improve the seismic resilience of their homes.

> "Pretty much every major earthquake over the past 170 years has shown that crumbling unreinforced masonry poses a significant risk to people's safety and homes.
>
> **Hamish Armstrong,** Public Education Manager

What's coming up in 2026 under this theme:

- We're funding four new biennial projects kicking off in 2026 that will improve our understanding of seismic safety.
- Outcomes from Drs Max Stephens and Charlotte Toma's (University of Auckland) NHC-funded study into the carbon impacts of updates to the New Zealand design standard building guidelines (TS 1170.5).
- We're releasing our updated Resilient Homes and Buildings Action Plan, covering achieved actions to date and new activities for improving resilience of the built environment.
- Outputs from Tom Robinson's (University of Canterbury) NHC-funded pilot study into potential national-scale landslide risk assessment for residential housing.

Better land

Stable land that is not prone to flooding, shaking or slipping is essential for resilient communities. We invest in identifying risky land, and producing advice, guidance and modelling that supports better decision-making.

Safer slopes

Did you know that we currently receive more claims from landslides than any other natural hazard? Since the Auckland Anniversary floods in 2023, losses from landslides have totalled $302 million – over four times the cost of all other natural hazards combined.

With many New Zealanders living on slopes, and an increase in extreme weather events, reducing the risk of landslides is a clear priority for us.

To that end, in 2025 we released new Slope Stability Guidance, which makes it easier for geotechnicians to identify and evaluate landslide risk.

This landmark guidance was developed by experts at the New Zealand Geotechnical Society (NZGS). Since its release, NZGS has been promoting the use of the guidance at conferences and workshops, both around New Zealand and internationally.

In a recent survey run by NZGS, 43% of participants said they used the guidance “often”, and 31% said they use it to support decision-making or project design.

Hear from end-users

Tayla Hill, Engineering Geologist at Stantec, NZ

“As an Engineering Geologist, landslides and slope instabilities can be a common encounter. Recently, I used the Unit 2 guidelines to assist me in mapping a landslide over in Wairarapa.

I think all geologists and geotechnical professionals would benefit from using this guidance, especially emerging professionals. It introduces landslide features and causes, outlines ground investigation and slope monitoring methods, and explains the geotechnical investigation process, project lifecycle, and engineering geological model.

Leandro R. Alejano, Professor at University of Vigo, Spain

“[The guidance] presents first a basic up-to-date approach for characterising rock masses, and then some key ideas regarding failure mechanism identifications and the first steps towards quantifying the risk of failure.

I have particularly enjoyed the preface where the philosophy behind stability analysis is well reflected.

I am sure other countries could use the manual to assess the stability of natural slopes. The seismic part of soil slope stability analysis is particularly well developed, so it can be especially useful in countries with strong seismic activity.

Planning for smart growth

We're investing in smarter land use planning tools that help decision-makers understand how development choices shape future risk. This year, we've supported two research projects toward this goal.

Dr Rob Cardwell from Market Economics developed a dynamic simulation model that shows how zoning and infrastructure decisions influence land use patterns over time. In a simulated scenario applied to Auckland flood plains, the model demonstrated that stricter zoning could reduce vulnerable residential development by up to 19%. This tool helps planners explore the interactions between zoning, accessibility, suitability, and neighbourhood effects to test policy scenarios before they are implemented.

Complementing this, researchers at the University of Waikato led by Professor Iain White are building an agent-based model that simulates how different property developers – from mum and dad outfits to large corporations – make decisions under different policy settings. Modelling how policy influences developer behaviour can help predict the effect of future residential growth and exposure to hazards, like flooding and landslides. Modelling potential futures can inform better hazard policy development now.

Together, these tools help planners and decision-makers make better-informed, risk-aware decisions that build resilience into the very fabric of our communities.

Proactive planning for faster recovery

In 2025, we launched the Pre-event Land Use Planning Methodology to help councils and communities plan for land use recovery before disasters occur.

This framework provides practical guidance for integrating recovery-focused planning into existing policies, enabling faster, safer and more sustainable decisions after natural hazard events. Developed from lessons learned in Canterbury, Kaikōura and recent severe weather, it supports risk reduction, climate adaptation and improved coordination. Used alongside our newly updated Risk Tolerance Methodology, it helps set objectives, assess natural hazard risk, and anticipate policy changes.

Both methodologies are available on our website, empowering decision-makers to build resilience now for a stronger future.

Submissions shaping policy

An important way we encourage policies that reduce or manage natural hazard risks is by submitting on central government policy changes and local government plan changes. In 2025, we submitted on 20 plans and policies – a record high.

Importantly, we're seeing an encouraging increase in organisations accepting our recommendations – in 2024/25, 89% of our submissions were accepted.

Councils are also engaging with us more actively, seeking our pre-emptive input and mitigation strategies.

In 2025, we also made all of our submissions easily accessible through our website at naturalhazards.govt.nz/resilience-and-research/reducing-risk.

Auckland's hidden faults

Auckland is often seen as geologically quiet, but two NHC-funded studies this year are helping challenge that assumption and improve our understanding of the city's earthquake risk.

The first study, led by Victoria University of Wellington seismologist, Dr Calum Chamberlain, used advanced machine learning to re-analyse seismic data from the Auckland Volcanic Field. The team detected more than five times as many earthquakes as previously catalogued, revealing that small earthquake sequences do occur in the region, even without volcanic unrest.

The second study, published by researchers from DEVORA, developed a new method for identifying "obscured faults" in urban areas – faults that may be hidden beneath volcanic deposits or city infrastructure. Using data from over 8,000 boreholes and high-resolution LiDAR, the team mapped 46 possible faults across Auckland, including one (Bucklands Beach Fault in East Auckland) that may still be active.

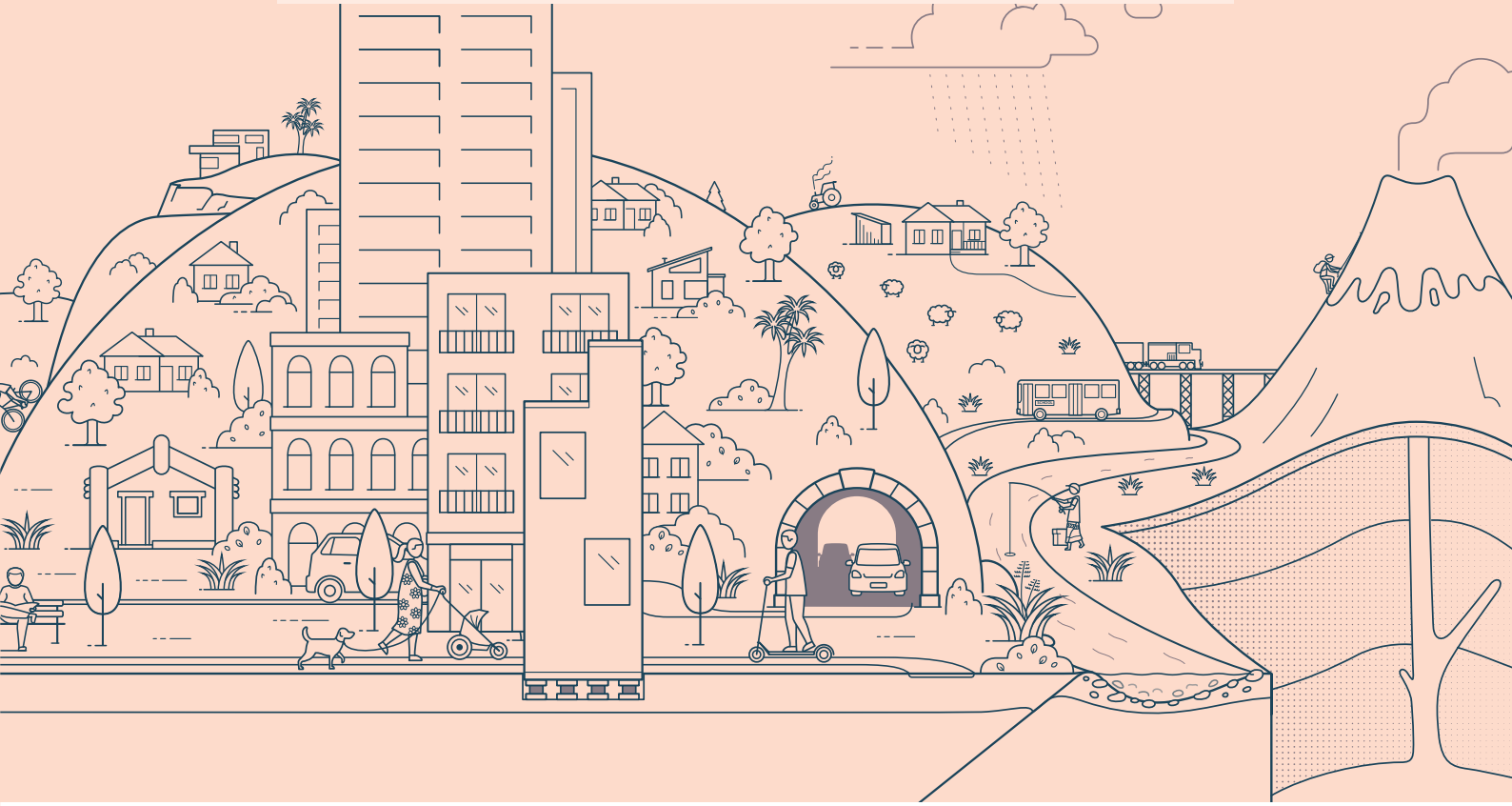
This work produced a new GIS fault database that will support future hazard assessments and land use planning.

A newly funded project led by Dr James Muirhead at the University of Auckland will add to this body of work by investigating how active Auckland's fault lines really are, using advanced mapping, ground-penetrating radar and trenching to uncover evidence of past earthquakes. Work will begin in 2026.

Our research investment helps fill critical gaps in understanding Auckland's seismic hazard. As the country's largest city continues to grow, understanding where faults lie – and how the land might respond to earthquakes – is essential for smarter land use planning, safer development and long-term resilience.

What's coming up in 2026 under this theme:

- We're releasing new guidance around uncertainty – an inevitable part of natural hazard risk management. The guidance will provide a consistent and adaptable approach for understanding, qualifying and quantifying uncertainty.
- We're releasing an updated Smarter Land Use Action Plan to help guide evidence-based decisions that reduce natural hazard risks and build resilience.
- We'll be keeping a close eye on resource management reforms and submitting our views to the Select Committee.



Working together

We work across government, industry and non-profit organisations to strengthen community resilience. By facilitating collaboration and connecting science, policy and practice, we help deliver outcomes that reduce risk and support faster recovery – together.

Fleur Templeton

New award honours legacy in science communication

This year we partnered with the Science Communicators Association of NZ (SCANZ) to launch a new award honouring our colleague, Fleur Templeton, who passed away in 2024. Fleur worked in our Research team as a science communicator and was an active, long-time member of SCANZ, where she mentored and inspired many in the field. The $10,000 award celebrates excellence in communicating natural hazard risk and resilience and will go towards the recipient's professional development and science communication activities. The winner will be announced in early 2026.

> "Fleur was always helping great people and great science to shine, and she'll continue to do that through this award.
>
> **Dr Natalie Balfour,** Head of Research

Partners in preparedness

When it comes to preparing for natural hazards, we believe that knowledge is power. We're committed to making information about natural hazard risks and their potential impacts publicly available, wherever possible.

This year, we signed a memorandum of understanding with Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) that will make it easier to work together towards our shared goal of supporting evidence-based decision-making on risk reduction and resilience.

Our work together includes:

- **Building a New Zealand view of risk and resilience**. LINZ shares data to help inform our risk and loss modelling, and NHC facilitates access to cutting-edge science and risk expertise.
- **Collaborating on Phase 2 of the Natural Hazards Portal**, working towards a 'one-stop shop' for all information related to natural hazards.
- **Developing a "National Building Database"**, an overview of New Zealand's building stock that will help inform our loss modelling.

New master's programme

This year we collaborated with Victoria University of Wellington to launch a new Master of Natural Hazard Science and Policy, a programme designed to strengthen New Zealand's capability to reduce natural hazard risk.

> "This programme will help grow a cohort of graduates with the skills and confidence to make informed, risk-aware decisions for our communities.
>
> **Dr Wendy Saunders,** Principal Advisor and Land Use Planning Champion

The programme is designed for policy analysts, planners, councillors and researchers who want to strengthen the science-to-policy pipeline and apply risk-informed thinking in real-world decision-making.

In the future, micro-credentials will be available for professionals who want targeted learning without committing to a full master's degree.

Partnering with universities to embed stronger risk reduction content is an important way we can help shape future policy and planning practice.

Stronger relationships for faster recovery

When an emergency strikes, a fast response relies on strong relationships between the agencies responsible for helping communities, with a clear understanding of who does what.

That's why, this year, we formally joined a partnership with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ).

From our perspective, the Natural Hazards Resilience Partnership ensures that insurance payouts – money that is critical for financing rebuilding efforts – is embedded into emergency planning and recovery.

The formal partnership also means that we can more easily share data, insights and experience with each other. For example, by developing clear procedures so that councils can share rapid building assessment data with insurers after an event, helping avoid delays and unnecessary site visits.

Together with NEMA and ICNZ, we are currently drafting a workstream that will further clarify how we will work together.

Engineering research to practice

A new programme aptly named BRiDGE – Building Resilience in Design Guidance for Engineering – will bridge the gap between research and practice in engineering design. Launched this year in partnership with MBIE, New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, and Engineering New Zealand, we expect BRiDGE to begin delivering new projects in 2026.

> "This mechanism allows us to pool our funding and ensure the guidance we produce delivers the best possible value and impact for the sector.
>
> **Prof Ken Elwood,** Chief Engineer, NHC and MBIE

Supporting professional societies

We're an active partner to New Zealand technical and professional societies involved in using or promoting natural hazard risk information.

These partnerships are an important way we help ensure the latest science and modelling is picked up by industry and used in practice.

In 2025, we're proud to have worked with the following organisations and initiatives:

- Sponsored the **QuakeCoRE annual meeting** of people working in earthquake resilience in New Zealand.
- Supported the **Plate Boundary Network**'s first in-person hui, which brought together people involved in natural hazards communications and engagement.
- Funded the **Geosciences New Zealand SAGE scholarship**, which gave University of Otago master's student Georgina Dempster the chance to attend a summer research trip to the US.
- Continued our partnership with **New Zealand Planning Institute** to support their work advocating for better risk-based land use planning outcomes, through conference support and contributions to professional development programmes.

- Sponsored the **Structural Engineering Society of New Zealand (SESOC)** conference, bringing together New Zealand's practising engineers to learn, consult and discuss the latest knowledge in structural engineering with a focus on resilient seismic design.
- Funded the **New Zealand Geotechnical Society** to continue developing resources such as the Slope Stability Units, updating the AGS Landslide Risk Management Guidelines, and providing ongoing education and training for engineering and geologists.
- Sponsored the **National Lifelines Utilities Forum**, which promotes shared learning from past hazard events and encourages the application of risk reduction strategies that enhance infrastructure resilience.
- Strengthened ties with the **New Zealand Association of Economists**, including supporting their conference.
- Supported the **Aotearoa Climate Action Network** through sponsoring and presenting at their conference.
- Continued our partnership with the **New Zealand Society of Structural Engineers**, through funding their annual conference and supporting a special edition publication of their journal The Bulletin, which described the basis behind the changes in the Technical Specifications (TS) released in 2025.
- For the first time, teamed up with the **Science Communicators Association of New Zealand** to launch the Fleur Templeton Memorial Award.
- Helped establish a new master's programme of natural hazard science and policy at **Victoria University of Wellington**.

What's coming up in 2026 under this theme:

- We're leading a training exercise for our National Disaster Resilience Strategy partners, including insurers and emergency response agencies, that will help us be better prepared for future responses.
- A special panel at the 2026 New Zealand Society of Structural Engineers conference, recognising 20 years of the Ivan Skinner Award, which we sponsor.
- Funding the first tranche of projects through our innovative new partnership with MBIE, NZTA and Engineering NZ – BRiDGE.

The Resilience team

From left to right:

Associate Prof Emma Hudson-Doyle, Principal Advisor Resilience

Wendy Saunders, Principal Advisor Risk Reduction & Land Use Planning Champion

Adam O'Hara, Principal Advisor Strategic Readiness

Julian Rincon, Advisor Risk Reduction

Prof Ken Elwood, Chief Engineer (NHC and MBIE)

Bruno Butler, Head of Strategic Readiness

Sally Owen, Senior Research Advisor

Lucy Kaiser, Senior Advisor Risk Reduction

Delia Tamsen, Senior Research Advisor

Livvy Harris, Advisor Risk Reduction

Alex Bygrave, Senior Advisor Public Education

Erin McEwan, Senior Advisor Risk Reduction

Alex Cartwright, Strategic Advisor Resilience

Natalie Balfour, Head of Research

Lydia Hodgson, Principal Advisor Strategic Readiness

Ghada Elashi, Senior Advisor Risk Reduction

Sarah-Jayne McCurrach, Head of Risk Reduction

Jo Horrocks, Chief Resilience Officer

Hamish Armstrong, Head of Public Education

Tess Tuxford, Senior Research Advisor

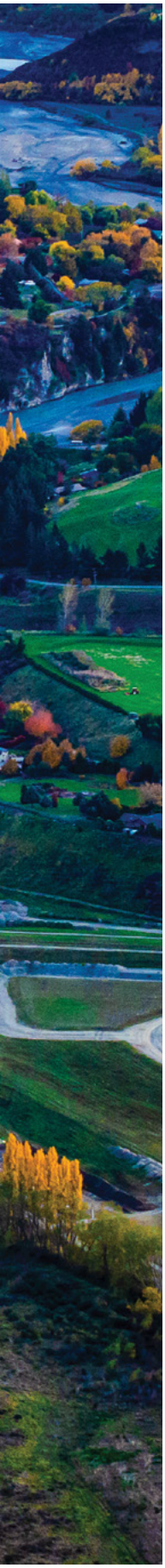
Caleb Dunne, Principal Advisor Risk Reduction

Nina Vidovic, Senior Science Communications Advisor

Sarah Wah, Finance Business Partner

Team members missing from the photo: Shyra Alladeen (Team Administrator), Chris McDowall (Natural Hazards Portal Lead), Hema Wihongi (Senior Advisor Māori Research), Josh Walker-Groube (Senior Advisor Strategic Readiness) and Tabitha Bushell (Senior Advisor Risk Reduction)

If you have any questions or want to find out more about what we do to support New Zealand's resilience to natural hazards, or talk about how we can work together, contact us at research@naturalhazards.govt.nz



Our vision is that natural hazard resilience becomes embedded in all aspects of decision-making for our homes, communities, towns and cities.

Natural Hazards Commission
Toka Tū Ake