

Understanding the need for, availability of, and interpretation of information by the public during large scale hazard events

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In partnership with Fire and Emergency New Zealand, QuakeCoRE, GNS Science and the ECLIPSE supervolcano project, this PhD project - commenced in 2019 - is looking at the challenges facing specific communities and populations in accessing and understanding emergency information during large scale hazard events.

- The project will be assessing the **relationship** that people have with natural hazards in their region by conducting a range of risk perception surveys.
- **Co-production** methods will be assessed for risk mitigation and preparedness implementation.
- A mixed-methods approach will be used, with data collected from a range of communities located in the **Taupō Volcanic Zone** to identify the factors that influence audience needs, availability and interpretation of emergency information. Guidelines can then be developed for emergency managers and other providers for the improved communication with the diverse range of audiences involved in a natural hazard response.

The socio-cultural context in which the public needs, has access to, and interprets information about natural hazards differs radically. This has implications for the effective communication of information during large scale hazard events. This audience heterogeneity presents challenges for the communication of critical information.

Improved understanding of the audiences, and regular work across the spectrum of community sectors, is essential to enable effective readiness and resilience.

This project positions community at its heart, and focuses on lessons from recent disasters and on research into the production of consistent and coherent public messages to instill credibility, public trust and confidence.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What common communication principles can be identified for effective communication across diverse audiences during large scale hazard events?
- How does information contribute to community resilience?
- What are the features and attributes of trusted information sources and channels?



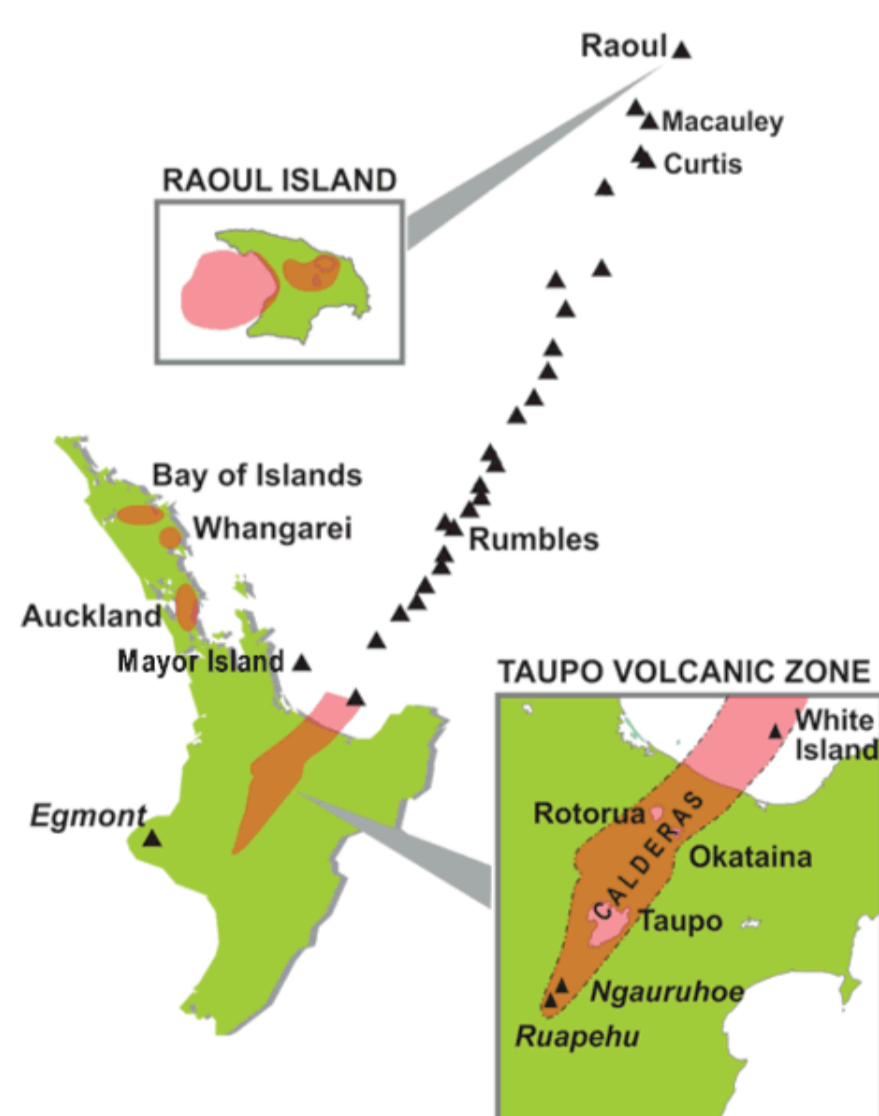
Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management communication

- What aspects influence whether all members of the public receive and understand hazard warning information during large scale hazard events?
- What's already in the emergency managers' toolbox of hazard communication and processes for disseminating warnings, and how effective has messaging been?

This project will investigate whether the co-production of risk mitigation solutions – through participatory outreach approaches with schools and the wider community – can enable those sectors of the public to become change agents to effectively interpret, manage and mitigate the threats associated with large-scale hazard events.

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The project study area:
Taupo Volcanic Zone in New Zealand's central North Island.
Image credit: GNS.