

Session 1

DON'T WORRY, I WILL NEVER HAPPEN

Mr Chris Hawker, Mr Peter Molony

University of Canterbury

At 4:35 am on September 4th 2010 the rupture of the previously unrecognized Greendale strike-slip fault beneath the Canterbury Plains of New Zealand's South Island produced a Mw 7.1 earthquake that caused widespread damage throughout the region. Incredibly, no deaths occurred and only two serious injuries were reported despite the epicentre lying only ~40 km west of the city of Christchurch (pop. ~386,000). The rupture released an estimated 648 kilotons of energy and the strong ground motion led to some building collapses, widespread non-structural damage and extensive liquefaction with an estimated loss of US\$3-4.5 billion.

Several thousand aftershocks followed the initial earthquake, some of significant magnitude but on February 22nd an Mw 6.3 earthquake occurred which changed the face of the City of Christchurch. Following both events, the University of Canterbury was substantially affected but largely due to the preparedness planning and training which had been undertaken over the preceding four years the University responded well to a major critical incident which had had a significant effect on the campus.

This paper is presented in two parts.

The first part will be presented by Chris Hawker, UC's Facilities and Operational Services Manager who, as a component of his portfolio of responsibilities is jointly tasked with developing and maintaining the University's emergency response capabilities. During both recent critical incidents, Chris fulfilled the role of Primary Incident Controller and led the Incident Management Team (IMT) over a combined period of eight weeks. Chris will discuss the issues faced by the University in the immediate response phase of both incidents and how the University addressed the critical issues over the subsequent weeks which, after the February earthquake, saw the University commence teaching in multiple alternative venues, including large marquees erected on two car parks.

The second part will be presented by Peter Molony, UC's Recovery Manager who during the immediate response to both events fulfils the role of Planning and Intelligence Manager within the Incident Management Team and who following the stand down of the IMT, assumed the role of Recovery Manager. Peter will discuss how the transition from response to recovery was managed, what the key business continuity issues facing the University were immediately after the event and how the recovery is progressing to date. Peter will also discuss how these events have changed risk perceptions at the University and what steps have been taken to further improve the institution's resilience for any future event.