As of 13 February 2026

Earthquake and Tsunami Workshop @ Wellington (2/16-17)

Dr Lucia Roncaglia
Dr Hiroyuki Fujiwara

Distinguished Guest
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kia Ora, Tena Koutou
キア　オラ　テナ　コト　（皆さん、こんにちは。）

Please accept my sincere congratulations on the convening of today's Earthquake and Tsunami Workshop.

Both Japan and New Zealand face the constant threat of earthquakes and associated tsunamis, making disaster prevention a top national priority.

In Japan, four tectonic plates, including the Pacific Plate, converge in the offshore region. The strain between these plates results in the accumulation of enormous energy, leading to frequent earthquakes.

Approximately 20 percent of the world's earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater occur in and around Japan. The Great East Japan Earthquake that struck in 2011 registered a magnitude of 9.0 and generated tsunami waves exceeding 10 meters at their maximum height, resulting in 28,567 casualties.

In response, Japan has vigorously promoted seismic reinforcement of buildings while actively advancing a wide range of research initiatives, including efforts to improve the prediction of future earthquakes.

Under the Takaichi administration, which was established last autumn, crisis management investment has been positioned as a major pillar of growth investment that leverages Japan's strengths. Furthermore, "Disaster Prevention and National Resilience" has been firmly designated as one of the 17 Strategic sector for Japan's Growth Strategy.

In New Zealand, two tectonic plates – the Pacific Plate and the

Australian Plate – meet, and, similar to Japan, earthquakes causing significant damage occur frequently, including the 2011 Canterbury Earthquake and the 2016 Kaikōra Earthquake. In the Canterbury Earthquake, precious lives of 185 people were lost, including 28 Japanese.

New Zealand Government places an emphasis on the rapid public release of observational data and on building disaster preparedness systems led by local communities. These opproaches are also policy priorities in Japan, and there are undoubtedly many areas in which Japan's experience can be effectively shared and applied, including these approaches

I understand that this workshop is being held pursuant to the Memorandum of Cooperation on the exchange of data and expertise, concluded in March 2023 between GNS (institute of Geological and Nuclear Science), now know as Earth Science New Zealand (ESNZ) and the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience of Japan (NIED) at the Japan-New Zealand Joint Committee on Science and Technology Cooperation.

Since the signing of the Memorandum, tangible progress has steadily been made. In the field of earthquake research, a joint session was held at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Japan Geoscience Union. In the field of volcanic research, outcomes on catastrophic eruption response methodologies are scheduled to be presented at a workshop to be held in Rotorua in just two weeks time on the 3rd of Marth. It is truly encouraging to see such visible achievements.

I would like to conclude my greetings in the hope that the exchange of research findings between researchers from Japan and New Zealand at today's workshop will inspire each other's work, thereby further advancing earthquake and tsunami research in both countries and fostering the evolution of our collaboration.

Thank you very much
Kia Ora
キアオラ （ありがとう。そしてさよなら。）