

Survey of Hawke's Bay Tourism Based Businesses: Tsunami Understanding and Preparation

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Abstract : The loss of life and livelihood experienced after the magnitude 9.3 Sumatra earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004 and magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami in northeastern Japan on 11 March 2011, has raised global awareness and brought tsunami phenomenology, nomenclature, and representation into sharp focus. At the same time, travel and tourism continue to increase, contributing around 1 in 11 jobs worldwide. This increase in tourism is especially true for coastal zones, placing pressure on decision-makers to downplay tsunami risks and at the same time provide adequate tsunami warning so that holidaymakers will feel confident enough to visit places of high tsunami risk. This study investigates how well tsunami preparedness messages are getting through for tourist-based businesses in Hawke's Bay New Zealand, a region of frequent seismic activity and a high probability of experiencing a nearshore tsunami. The aim of this study is to investigate whether tourists based businesses are well informed about tsunamis, how well they understand that information and to what extent their clients are included in awareness raising and evacuation processes. In high-risk tsunami zones, such as Hawke's Bay, tourism based businesses face competitive tension between short term business profitability and longer term reputational issues related to preventable loss of life from natural hazards, such as tsunamis. This study will address ways to accommodate culturally and linguistically relevant tourist awareness measures without discouraging tourists or being too costly to implement.

Keywords : tsunami risk and response, travel and tourism, business preparedness, cross cultural knowledge transfer

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