



Newsletter February 2014

The Resilient Communities research programme, featuring a team from the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA), Building Research (BRANZ), Public Policy & Research and National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), has been running for over a year, and is due to finish in September 2014. We have almost completed data gathering, and are now developing tools and writing up research findings. Here are the highlights of our work to date.

Flood experience tool

Information from surveys, interviews and focus groups with older people have been used to develop a Flood experience tool, which is specific to New Zealand experiences and conditions. Development of this tool has been informed by the Lancaster University Flood Snakes and Ladders game. The tool is designed to support and improve planning, policy and practice around response and recovery. It can be used as a training and awareness raising exercise too. Testing of the tool is happening now with older people, community organisations working with older people, housing providers, service providers, emergency response organisations, councils and government agencies. Contact us if you would like to be part of a test session, or if you would like to use the tool in your organisation.

Home site selection tool

This tool provides older householders with a quick way to identify some typical hazard exposures that may be present on or near a section. Information is provided about where people can find out more about vulnerability of a location. The tool covers: high winds, windborne debris, river or stream flooding, urban stormwater flooding and run off, coastal flooding, coastal erosion and landslips. We will be testing the tool with technical experts and older people in March and April. Contact us if you would like to test this tool.

House resilience tools

BRANZ has completed surveying of flooded and slip affected case study properties that are now repaired. Based on learning from these physical inspections, and from analysis of findings from the national survey, BRANZ has developed two prototype tools. One gives guidelines on design solutions, heating, cooking and lighting amenities that can be incorporated into new homes and existing homes when renovating. The second offers guidance about good choices when choosing a new home or renovating an existing dwelling with a focus on resilience and risk features.

National survey of older people

A draft final report of preliminary findings from the national survey has been completed. The report presents results from the survey of over 600 older people (aged 65+) who have experienced an adverse natural event. A second survey was conducted with 300 younger people (aged 25-64) who had experience of an adverse natural event themselves and/or had an older person close to them with experience of an adverse natural event. The report is currently being reviewed and when finalised will be available via the programme website.

Other surveys

We have surveyed councils that provide housing. All but one has returned a completed survey. Responses are currently being analysed. We have surveyed retirement village operators and received responses covering 189 retirement villages. Responses are currently being analysed.

Interviews and focus groups

In-depth interviews have been conducted with older householders who have experienced flooding, storms, or landslides in the past three years. In addition, focus groups of older people have explored experiences of adverse natural events, preparedness, response and recovery. Findings from the in-depth interviews and focus groups will be written up as a research report.

Floodplains Susceptibility

NIWA has completed a report on high-level susceptibility in NZ's floodplains. This shows a slightly higher proportion of 65+ year olds living near rivers compared to the overall population.

Coastal Susceptibility

NIWA has mapped coastal areas around NZ that lie between mean sea level (MSL) and 5 m and between 5 and 10 m above MSL using the latest digital elevation model of NZ's topography. This is not as accurate as LiDAR (or aerial laser scanning) which only some councils have available. The next stage is to compare areas with LiDAR to check accuracy and then determine the demographics of people living in these coastal zones.

Summit meeting

Look out for our first findings summit, to be held on 15 May 2014 in Wellington. This will feature Professor Sue Roaf, School of the Built Environment, Herriot-Watt University, Edinburgh and Dr Sally Priest, Flood Hazards Research Centre, Middlesex University, London.

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