



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2010

### LEARNING from Earthquakes: EERI Sending Reconnaissance Team to Christchurch, New Zealand

(Oakland, CA) A multidisciplinary team of US earthquake researchers and practitioners, organized by the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute ([EERI](#)), in partnership with the Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research Center ([PEER](#)), is traveling to New Zealand this week to document scientific, engineering and societal effects resulting from the M7.1 Canterbury earthquake that struck near Christchurch, New Zealand on September 3<sup>rd</sup> (UTC time).

Under the leadership of UC Berkeley Professor Mary Comerio, former chair of the Department of Architecture, EERI is organizing and sending this team to bring back lessons for practice and academia. The team will spend approximately five days collecting data and observing the damage associated with the M7.1 earthquake, the most damaging that New Zealand has seen since 1931. The earthquake has damaged nearly 100,000 of the 160,000 buildings and homes in Christchurch, with initial estimates of losses between \$2 billion and \$4 billion. There have been almost 80 aftershocks felt and recorded, with the strongest measuring a magnitude of 5.4 on the Richter scale.

The team is organized under the umbrella of EERI's Learning from Earthquakes Program, which receives support from the U.S. National Science Foundation. PEER, headquartered at UC Berkeley, has provided additional organizational and funding support for the team. The EERI team will coordinate efforts with the Geo-engineering Extreme Events Reconnaissance Association ([GEER](#)) team, led by Russell Green of Virginia Tech, which will be in Christchurch at the same time, investigating geotechnical conditions.

In addition to Dr. Comerio, team members traveling to Christchurch include: Ian Aiken, principal at Seismic Isolation Engineering Inc; Lucy Arendt, associate professor of management at the University of Wisconsin; Michael Bruneau, professor of engineering at State University of New York at Buffalo, Peter Dusicka, assistant professor at Portland State University; William Holmes, principal structural engineer at Rutherford & Chekene; Charles Roeder, professor of engineering at the University of Washington; and Fred Turner, structural engineer with the California Seismic Safety Commission. Also joining the EERI team in the field are teams from AIR Worldwide, Humboldt State University, MCEER and the U.S. Geological Survey.

The team will also be coordinating closely with the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering and GNS Science, as well as faculty at the University of Canterbury.

Field observations and findings will be posted on EERI's Canterbury Earthquake clearinghouse site at:

<http://eqclearinghouse.org/20100903-christchurch/>

#### **About EERI and the Learning From Earthquakes program**

The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, headquartered in Oakland, CA, is the nation's preeminent technical organization dedicated to reducing society's risk to the effects of earthquakes. For over thirty years, EERI has managed a National Science Foundation-sponsored project called Learning from Earthquakes. EERI has sent researchers to investigate all damaging earthquakes across the world. The research teams have brought back valuable observations that hold lessons for U.S. and international engineering practitioners and researchers as they strive to reduce earthquake hazards. After the Chile team returns, their findings will be published and briefings will be made to researchers, practitioners and decision makers.

#### **Comments:**

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