

Earthquake creates a 'first' for NZ mapping

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SUMMARY

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The 2011 Christchurch earthquake and its aftermath dramatically changed the area's landscape – hills and the surrounding plains were altered, whole areas of homes were demolished, while some surrounding towns have grown in size. All of this created real challenges for the cartographers at New Zealand's official mapping agency, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ).

Never before had a natural disaster had so great an impact on New Zealand's maps, and the current standards for topographic mapping didn't allow much leeway for showing the impact at a scale of 1:50 000. Accurate and up to date maps and map data are essential for land management, planning, and search and rescue. Cartographers needed to find ways of showing changes to selected topographic features forever changed by the earthquake.

This presentation discusses these challenges, comparing maps and high resolution satellite and aerial imagery from before and after the earthquakes. It shows how LINZ's cartographers overcame these challenges, ensuring that this rapid and extreme change has been documented for both map users and New Zealand's history.

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