



## PhD Scholarship

University of Canterbury Earthquake-Recovery Doctoral Scholarship.

The University of Canterbury and Resilient Organisations are pleased to announce a PhD Scholarship available for researching **Collaborative Approaches to the Recovery of Organisations Post-Disaster**. This scholarship is one of six that the University of Canterbury are offering to support the recovery of Christchurch and Canterbury in the aftermath of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes.

The scholarship is for research on the following topic:

1 Title of Research Project: **Collaborative Approaches to the Recovery of Organisations Post-Disaster**

2 Project Outline including an explanation of the earthquake-related nature of the project:

**Overview and deliverables:** A key feature observed to be emerging within the recovery landscape in Canterbury is a rise in collaboration and mutual support between organisations. In the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquakes, many businesses shared premises and resources with their direct competitors, sometimes to the detriment of their own productivity; co-located businesses jointly promoted themselves as 'open for business' to achieve critical mass for attracting foot-traffic; and initiatives to promote clusters of recovery, such as the IT Hub, are in development. Very few studies in the disaster literature discuss the rise of such collaborative approaches in recovery, nor provide clear advice on the strengths and weaknesses of different collaborative approaches to support recovery of the business community.

This research project will evaluate how organisations in Canterbury are utilising collaborative approaches to support their recovery and will evaluate whether these approaches are proving effective. Key deliverables from this research project will be:

- Analysis of the pros and cons of different collaborative approaches to business recovery, including international lessons learnt where initiatives to promote collaboration have been implemented previously.
- Evaluation of collaborative approaches to business recovery currently being implemented or proposed for the Canterbury region (both through 'organised' initiatives and those emerging organically within the business community), critiquing the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Identification of potential leverage points for the Canterbury recovery effort where there is opportunity to either introduce new initiatives or to support initiatives already underway to reinvigorate business recovery momentum.

**About the research team:** Resilient Organisations is a research programme, led by the University of Canterbury and involving nearly twenty researchers from around New Zealand, with the goal of improving the resilience of New Zealand organisations to major disasters and other crises. The programme was initiated in 2004 and is funded through the Natural Hazards Research Platform as well as co-funding from other industry partners.

**Need for the research:** In November 2010 the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management commissioned Resilient Organisations to investigate the dynamics of business recovery emerging within the CBD contexts of Kaiapoi and Christchurch following the 4<sup>th</sup> September earthquake. That research identified a distinct departure in the business recovery process from a typical “survival-of-the-fittest” type business model to one that emphasises collaboration and mutual benefit<sup>1</sup>. An initial review of the literature to explore how this observation fits with international experience and best practice identified a significant gap in the literature; there are very few studies on the value of collaborative approaches to support business recovery post-disaster.

Whilst organisation theory is increasingly recognising the importance of relationships and networks in enabling organisations to conduct business and solve problems, and there is a strong recognition of the importance of collaboration and networks for disaster response, the role of inter-organisational collaboration in business recovery is less explored. This research will provide much needed advice on the value or otherwise of collaborative approaches to business recovery following major disasters, as well as providing practical advice on critical success factors and potential pitfalls during implementation.

**How the research will be conducted:** Being a PhD thesis project, the student will have significant input into the methodological design of the project, however the below provides an indication for the Panel of what the research approach might look like:

- International literature review on the use and effectiveness of collaborative approaches to business recovery and growth in both ‘normal’ and post-disaster contexts.
- With reference to the international literature, the student will develop an evaluation matrix for categorising and critiquing alternative collaborative approaches.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with ‘key informants’ from the Canterbury business community on what collaborative approaches have been implemented or proposed, along with perspectives on the value of such approaches and why they have/have not been effective in this instance.
- Selection of 4 or 5 collaborative initiatives for more in-depth evaluation of their benefits/costs, critical success factors and independent assessment of how effective they have been within the Canterbury context.
- Summarise research findings into practical best practice advice for those tasked with supporting business recovery in the aftermath of disaster events.
- Fully document the research into a PhD thesis and papers for publication.

**Engagement with research end-users:** This project will be designed as ‘action research’ to provide timely interim results and advice to CERA, other Government Agencies and business support organisations.

Resilient Organisations has a strong track record of engagement with research end users, including established relationships with CERA, Recover Canterbury (Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce and the Canterbury Development Corporation), the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Town Centres New Zealand, Enterprise North Canterbury, Selwyn District Council, the Central City Business Association, CANCEARN and the Canterbury Business Recovery Network. These connections will be utilised to form a Reference Group for this research, with whom the research scope will be discussed and research results regularly presented. These existing contacts will also form the starting point for rolling interviews of key informants.

**Fit within a broader research context:** Following the 4 September 2010 earthquake, the Resilient

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<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, J. R., Seville, E, Kachali, H., Vargo, J., Whitman, Z. (2011) Post Disaster Organisational Recovery in a Central Business District Context: the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. Resilient Organisations Research Report 2011/03. [www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml](http://www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml).

Organisations research programme initiated a package of research to monitor and actively support the recovery of organisations following the earthquake<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>. This research is designed to complement these existing research projects, and the PhD student will become a member of a vibrant organisational resilience research community based at the University of Canterbury. They will also be working alongside international and other Natural Hazard Research Platform researchers who are collaborating with Resilient Organisations on these projects.

3 Brief description of that part of the research record of the proposed Senior Supervisor that is relevant to the proposed project:

The supervisory team for this PhD student will involve:

- Dr John Vargo - Senior Supervisor (Senior Lecturer in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems and co-leader of the Resilient Organisations Research Programme).
- Dr Erica Seville (Adjunct Senior Fellow in the Department of Civil and Natural Resources Engineering and co-leader of the Resilient Organisations Research Programme).
- Plus an opportunity to involve others from Commerce in the supervisory team. The supervisory team would be finalised once the student is selected, depending on their background, to fill any expertise gaps identified.

#### Details of the scholarship:

The scholarship is awarded to a University of Canterbury PhD applicant. The scholarship provides for a living allowance and tuition fees for three years.

- The current emolument of this scholarship is NZ\$20,000 per EFTS. The scholarship also covers tuition fees for the thesis enrolment at the New Zealand domestic rate for the term of the scholarship
- The scholarship is tenable for study towards a PhD degree at the University of Canterbury for a period equivalent to up to 3 EFTS.
- Application for a scholarship must be made to the Scholarships Office, University of Canterbury, on the approved form obtainable from that office and no later than **5.00 pm on 11 November 2011**. (Please note that if you are interested in applying for this scholarship but cannot meet this deadline for any reason, please contact [erica.seville@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:erica.seville@canterbury.ac.nz) )
- Links to the Scholarship Office and this particular scholarship are:  
<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/scholarships/?source=currentstudents>  
<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipDetails.aspx?ScholarshipID=6935.1348>

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.resorgs.org.nz](http://www.resorgs.org.nz) for further information

<sup>3</sup> Kachali, H., Stevenson, J. R., Whitman, Z., Seville, E., Vargo, J., Wilson, T. (2010) Preliminary Results from the Organisational Resilience and Recovery Study December 2010. [www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml](http://www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml).

<sup>4</sup> Stevenson, J.R., Vargo, J. Seville, E., Kachali, H., McNaughton, A., Powell, F., Battisti, M., Deakins, D., (2011) The Recovery of Canterbury's Organisations: A comparative analysis of the 4 September 2010, 22 February and 13 June 2011 earthquakes. Resilient Organisations Research Report 2011/04. [www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml](http://www.resorgs.org.nz/pubs.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> Stevenson, J. R., Kachali, H., Whitman, Z., Seville, E., Vargo, J., Wilson, T., (2011) Preliminary Observations on the Impacts of the 22 February 2011 Christchurch Earthquake on Organisations and the Economy. New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering Bulletin, vol 44, n 2, June 2011, pp 65-76.

- The scholarships are awarded by the University Council on the recommendation of the host Department, School, Institute or Centre in which the research will be undertaken, and with the approval of the Dean of Postgraduate Research.
- In making its recommendation the Department will consider the general suitability of the applicant for the proposed thesis topic, including academic achievement and the ability of the applicant to pursue research.
- No award will be made if in the opinion of the Dean of Postgraduate Research there are no suitable candidates.
- All other conditions of the scholarship are as for the University of Canterbury Doctoral Scholarship.
- The terms of the award may be varied from time to time by the Council upon the recommendation of the Dean of Postgraduate Research.

**Both international and domestic students are encouraged to apply.** Please note that as international PhD students in New Zealand pay domestic fees, this scholarship will cover enrolment fees for international students.

**Ours is a multi-disciplinary research project and this scholarship is open to applicants from discipline.**

For more information on the Resilient Organisations research team, see [www.resorgs.org.nz](http://www.resorgs.org.nz).