

ICOMOS NEW ZEALAND
TE MANA O NGA POUWHENUA O TE AO
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
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ICOMOS New Zealand:

SUBMISSION TO THE CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKES ROYAL COMMISSION

1. This submission addresses the Royal Commission's issue 3 – Inquiry into legal and best practice requirements, and issue 6 – Future measures.
2. ICOMOS New Zealand acknowledges the loss of life and injury and grief occasioned by the collapse of and damage to heritage buildings and other buildings in the Christchurch earthquakes. We appreciate this opportunity to provide input into the Commission's inquiry so that the loss of life, injury, collapse, and damage caused by any further such events can be avoided as far as possible.
3. ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organisation of heritage professionals dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. The organisation was founded in 1965 as a result of the international adoption in Venice of the Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites in the previous year. ICOMOS is UNESCO's principal advisor in matters concerning the conservation and protection of historic monuments and sites. The New Zealand National Committee of ICOMOS was established in 1989 and incorporated in 1990.
4. ICOMOS New Zealand has 86 members made up of professionals with a particular interest and expertise in heritage issues, including architects, engineers, heritage advisers, archaeologists, lawyers, and planners.
5. In 1993 ICOMOS New Zealand published the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. A revised ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value was approved in September 2010 and is available on the ICOMOS New Zealand web site.

6. The purpose of the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter is to set out principles and processes to guide the conservation of places of cultural heritage value in New Zealand.
7. The ICOMOS NEW Zealand Charter follows international precedents, notably the Venice Charter (1964), the Burra Charter (1999), and the Nara Declaration on Authenticity (1994).
8. The fundamental premise of the Venice Charter was respect for heritage fabric, the discovery of it where it is hidden, and procedures to conserve it and distinguish it from any necessary new work.
9. The Burra Charter stressed the mapping of the heritage values of a place and the linkage between the heritage values and planning for the conservation of the place.
10. The Nara Declaration was a development which stressed the associative and spiritual values of places of cultural heritage significance.
11. The heritage conservation principles outlined in the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter are based on a fundamental respect for significant heritage fabric and the associative or spiritual values of the place, conserved where necessary to ensure long term survival and the continuation of cultural heritage value, with the use of modern technology and materials where justified to ensure lasting stability
12. The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter adapts the Venice and Burra Charter precepts to the New Zealand context, and includes a section on Maori cultural heritage values.
13. The 1993 ICOMOS New Zealand Charter has been a key tool for informing heritage conservation and practice in Christchurch and elsewhere in New Zealand over the past 20 years.
14. The 1993 ICOMOS New Zealand Charter includes a clause on risk mitigation, stating that *“All places of cultural heritage value should be assessed as to their potential risk from any natural process or event. Where a significant risk is determined, appropriate action to minimise the risk should be undertaken. Where appropriate, a risk mitigation plan should be prepared.”* The 1993 ICOMOS New Zealand Charter goes on to state that *“Repair of a technically higher standard than the original workmanship or materials may be justified where the life expectancy of the site or material is increased, the new material is compatible with the old and the cultural heritage value is not diminished. New material should be identifiable.”*
15. These statements can be interpreted as advocating for higher levels of strengthening of heritage buildings in order to protect fabric of cultural value.

16. Protection of heritage fabric at the highest level may also be seen as promoting the protection of human life.
17. The revision of the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter in 2010 (known as the “*ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value 2010*”) clarifies and extends many matters of conservation principle and practice, and includes a revised clause on risk mitigation, which states “*Places of cultural heritage value may be vulnerable to natural disasters such as flood, storm, or earthquake..In order to safeguard cultural heritage value, planning for risk mitigation and emergency management is necessary. Potential risks to any place of cultural heritage value should be assessed. Where appropriate, a risk mitigation plan, an emergency plan, and/or a protection plan should be prepared, and implemented as far as possible, with reference to a conservation plan*”.
18. A distinction should be drawn between the principles and processes set out in the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter, and the way in which some territorial authorities have had regard to these or have referenced them in district plan objectives and policies.
19. The principles and policies of the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter 1993 fully allowed for effective strengthening of buildings, and the application of those principles in such a way that cultural heritage values were protected to the greatest extent possible. Evidence of the successful application of these principles may be seen in a number of buildings which have been upgraded to achieve high levels of seismic resistance without significant loss of cultural heritage value. Such strategies, and the principles which support them, should be fundamental to processes regulating both the strengthening and maintenance of earthquake-prone heritage buildings, and also the salvage and restoration of buildings affected by earthquake events, in Christchurch and elsewhere in New Zealand.
20. ICOMOS New Zealand requests that the Commission considers recommending to the Crown’s ministerial authorities that the principles of the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter 2010 are promoted through the Building Act and any regulations made under it and the Resource Management Act and correspondingly in district plan provisions. Consents for work related to heritage places can thereby be conditioned through the resource consent process to ensure the least possible loss of cultural heritage value in accordance with the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter 2010.

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