

Role of Higher Education for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

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Photo above: Professor Richard Haigh opening the Round Table

A Roundtable discussion on the role of Higher Education in supporting implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 was held at the 5th International Conference on Building Resilience, Newcastle University, Australia. This round table was facilitated by Professor Dilanthi Amararatunga and Professor Richard Haigh, Global Disaster Resilience Centre, University of Huddersfield, UK. Other panel members included Dr Jamie Mackee, Dr Jason VonMeding, Dr Catherine Forbes and Associate Professor Thayaparan Gajendran.

This year sees the convergence of three global policy frameworks: the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015), The Sustainable Development Goals (September 2015; SDGs) and the Climate Change Agreements (December 2015: COP21). This represents an opportunity to emphasise cross-cutting themes, including the importance of research and education across the different global policy agendas in disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and in doing so, to support evidence-based decision-making.

Outcome of this roundtable discussion into a major global study that is exploring the role of Higher Education in supporting implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted by 187 UN members states in March 2015. The Sendai Framework has an enhanced role for science and knowledge, including explicit mention of coproduction. Science is called to action repeatedly in the text; be it in disaster risk reduction education and training, post-disaster reviews, research into disaster scenarios or early warning systems. Modelling and early warning are especially emphasised, but there is also recognition of wider social processes, including culture, as well as renewed emphasis on training and within this on integrated approaches.

Participants were invited to consider the challenges set out in the new framework and the opportunities for Higher Education to contribute to the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health, and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years.

Photo below: joining the discussion – Professor Mark Hastak, Purdue University, Dr Jamie Mackee and Dr Catherine Forbes from University of Newcastle



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