

WAS\*IS Interest Statement: Kevin Ronan

The opportunity to participate in the WAS\*IS workshop is exciting for a number of reasons. First, one of my main programmatic research areas is in the area of the social science of hazards and disasters. Second, a bit of background might assist giving context to a few other reasons for wanting to attend WAS\*IS. My family and I spent just over 10 years in New Zealand, shifting here in mid-2005. While in New Zealand, our team's research in this area started in 1995 following the first of two eruptions of Mount Ruapehu. We looked at children and parent reactions to the eruption and, following an initial assessment, did a school-based intervention to assist affected children cope more effectively. Following this research, our team has continued to have a focus on matters related to Recovery. However, in line with other developments in my profession of clinical psychology as well as other areas, including emergency management, our focus has clearly been much more on prevention and the Readiness phase of the hazardous events cycle, with a focus on both the school and larger community context. Since being here, we have started research in this area, having finished our first school-based project this year. However, with others, we are now planning larger scale research. As a consequence, additional reasons for being excited about the possibility of attendance would relate to being a fairly recent arrival, wanting to meet others of like mind and assisting with acquiring knowledge of current research, practice and policy in Australia. Another reason for wanting to attend has to do with a passion for watching the weather, ever since seeing the devastating aftermath of a tornado just up the road from where we lived in the U.S. in the 1960's (Tracy, Minnesota). Finally, I do believe that I might have something to contribute to the workshop given my experience and passion for social science research and practice in this area.