

## **PALEOTSUNAMIS COME OF AGE?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*“In the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami residents will be glad to know that we do not have a tsunami hazard on our coast”*. Local government and media statements such as this have done little to promote tsunami awareness in New Zealand. Based primarily on historical data and a limited number of events, these statements have completely ignored published geological evidence for past tsunamis. However, we have developed a geological database of palaeotsunami sites with an aim to identifying possible tsunami sources. The recent inclusion of important coastal archaeological sites has added significantly to the record of events over the past 700 years or so. In particular, it has highlighted the devastating effects of events that occurred in 15th century New Zealand. From the initial observations of sites around central New Zealand, the talk focuses on the Bay of Plenty where a detailed analysis of palaeotsunami deposits gives an indication of the magnitude and frequency of events over the last few thousand years. The results from this analysis also serve to groundtruth numerical models developed for tsunami generation, propagation, and inundation in the region.