

Are we ready?

There seems to be a view that natural disasters don't happen to us. When was the last biggish one? The Lakes and Clutha River flooding? The Alexandra wild fires? 1999, right?

We've had a charmed ride, for most of the last ... how long?

Which might explain why there's no sense of urgency about civil defence. Yes, we go through the motions (and the few people paid to take this seriously will say that we do more than that), but I've got a nagging feeling that we're not ready.

If there was a big shake on the Alpine Fault, and we're overdue for one, how well would we do? No electricity, no roads, no airports, no trucks with supermarket supplies, maybe no piped water and no sewage disposal. What would you do? What would you expect the councils, or the government, to do?

I'd like to feel that on day 2, there would be a plan. When the fires were out, we'd all be coping. But a few people making sandwiches? What about after lunch?

I know it's not sexy – who wants to think about that stuff. It may never happen. And you can argue that anyway it's not worth planning because on the day, the plans will be useless. But I still feel, in my water, that we're not ready – and we should be.

Malcolm Macpherson
Thursday, 3 April 2014
225 words