

Media release

Embargoed to Midday Wednesday 27 August 2008

Hole under Eden Park to monitor effects of All Black fans

A 250-metre deep hole will be drilled under the new stand at Eden Park to give new insights into the activity underneath Auckland, including the underground impact of large crowds.

The Borehole Instrument Centre for Eden Park (BICEP) will measure seismic activity and vibrations in the ground under the stadium. The information will give a better understanding of how to design large structures to withstand earthquakes. The data will be collected and analysed by scientists at the Institute of Earth Science and Engineering (IESE) of The University of Auckland.

The BICEP project requires a 250 metre borehole to be drilled under the site of the new South Stand at Eden Park. It will be situated directly under the highest point of the stadium, and an array of instruments at multiple depths along the borehole will provide a three-dimensional view of earth movements directly below Eden Park.

Scientists and engineers at IESE will use information generated by the BICEP project in a variety of ways. The readings from the seismic instruments will provide an ongoing image of the movements of soil and rock below the surface, as well as measuring small earthquakes and other seismic events which may not be able to be measured at the surface. These readings will inform future construction projects in the Auckland region which may be impacted by seismic movements. In addition, analysis of the rocks and soil removed during the drilling process will add to the picture of Auckland's geologic history.

"The project at Eden Park is very exciting and will give us new insight into the Auckland region," says Liam Wotherspoon, Project Lead. "The instruments will measure and observe deep underground activities, where background noise is removed and small events are more easily seen. As far as we know, BICEP is the first observation centre under a major sporting venue, and it will be interesting to monitor the effects that crowds at Eden Park have on the ground beneath them."

The BICEP project is funded by IESE with support from the Earthquake Commission, Golden Bay Cement, Fletcher Construction, Connell Wagner, Boart Longyear, the Eden Park Redevelopment Board, and the Eden Park Trust Board.

The Institute of Earth Science and Engineering is a joint venture between The University of Auckland and Auckland UniServices Ltd, creating a single point of contact within the University for earth science research and projects with industry, government and other universities.

Media event

A media briefing, including the official start of drilling, will be held at Eden Park from 11am to Midday on Wednesday, 27 August. Please meet and sign in at the Fletchers

Construction site office, 88 Sandringham Rd. The car park is adjacent to the site office.

Contact

Danelle Clayton, Communications Adviser
Phone 09 373 7599 ext 84953
or 021 383 361
d.clayton@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Liam Wotherspoon
IESE Post-doctoral Fellow and Project Lead
Phone 09 373 7599 ext 84632
l.wotherspoon@auckland.ac.nz