

# N. Zealand sceptics defy 'Moonman' quake prophecy

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Ken Ring, a quasi-mystic [mathematician](#) known as the "Moonman", claims he predicted last month's 6.3-magnitude quake by studying the moon and has warned another tremor will rock New Zealand's second-largest city on March 20.

So far 166 people have been confirmed killed in February's disaster, although police have said they expect the figure to rise to more than 200.

New Zealand Skeptics spokeswoman Vicki Hyde said many in Christchurch were taking Ring seriously and her organisation had organised a "non-event" lunch on the day to try to set their minds at ease.

"At times like these, we think it's irresponsible to allow anyone to exploit the understandable anxieties of Christchurch residents," she said, accusing Ring of seeking "opportunistic publicity".

Hyde said prominent sceptics, including members of the scientific community who have attacked Ring's theories, would attend the lunch in a historic stone building on a Christchurch hilltop.

Environment Minister Nick Smith, who holds a PhD in geo-technical engineering, described the lunch as a public service event.

"The last thing needed by thousands of traumatised people in Canterbury, including elderly and children, is junk science and made-up predictions of future major quakes," he said.

In response to the attacks, Ring has said will make no public comment until after March 20.

His theories centre on the fact that moon is now unusually close to the Earth, exerting a strong [gravitational pull](#).

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