Mass movement can be shown to be the dominant geomorphic process in many parts of New Zealand. Of particular importance are episodes of extensive slope failure associated with intense rainfall and seismic triggers. Mass movement response to triggers such as these can be localised, but is more often regional in its extent, reflecting the spatial distribution of the triggering energy. These events are common, occurring somewhere in New Zealand several times a year. They are an integral component of the medium- to long-term regional sediment flux, and they are important for medium- to long-term landscape development. Clearly, mass movement produces morphological change at local scales, and cumulatively they also make a contribution to broader landform development in many parts of New Zealand. Their significance can be assessed from the extent to which the landscape shows the imprint of these phenomena. Variation in the extent of this imprint over time and space may be an important indicator of changing environmental and geomorphic boundary conditions.

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