International Association of Geomorphologists

11th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology

Christchurch, New Zealand, 2–6 February 2026

and

ICG2026 Young Geomorphologists Training Program

"Methods for assessing geomorphic processes and change"

Christchurch, New Zealand 30, January–7 February 2026

Report

Vittoria Vandelli

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
vittoria.vandelli@unimore.it

Day 1 – 2nd February

The first day of the Conference was characterized by a wide range of interdisciplinary contributions covering different branches of geomorphology. Among the sessions I attended, the one on "Coastal dynamics and climate change: from the recent past to the near future", presenting stimulating case studies from diverse environmental contexts and highlighting the complex interactions between geomorphic processes and global change.

I also attended the 1st IAG General Assembly, during which the Brunsden Medal was awarded to Prof. Piotr Migon. The ceremony represented an important moment of recognition within the geomorphological community. In his remarks, Prof. Migoń warmly encouraged early-career researchers to actively engage in IAG initiatives and to foster international collaboration within the geomorphological community. During the Assembly, the IAG-grant holders were also presented (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – IAG-grant holders presented at the 1st IAG General Assembly.

Day 2 – 3rd February

Throughout the second day, I participated in multiple sessions addressing natural hazards and landscape processes.

In particular, I attended the session "The geomorphological impacts of landslides and their associated hazards", where diverse approaches to landslide risk assessment and landslide monitoring were presented. During this session, I delivered my oral presentation entitled "An integrated approach to understand landslide dynamics under climate change: a case study from the Emilia Apennines (Northern Italy)". In addition, I presented a poster entitled "Virtual Field Trips for geoheritage outreach and geotourism promotion" within the session "Geomorphology for geoconservation: innovative approaches to geoheritage analysis". Both contributions were followed by constructive feedback and discussion which led to the planning of potential future collaborations and joint research developments.

Day 3 – 4th February

Field Excursion: Kaikōura Earthquake Area

The third day was dedicated to a field trip to the epicentral area of the 2016 Mw 7.8 Kaikōura Earthquake in North Canterbury. The excursion provided the participants with an exceptional opportunity to directly observe the geomorphic effects of a major seismic event.

We visited a segment of the Humps Fault, where the fault scarp produced by the 2016 earthquake remains clearly visible. We also examined the landslide triggered along the Leader River, characterized by a deposit covering approximately 600,000 m² and an estimated volume between 6 and 8 million m³ (Fig. 2). The landslide resulted from the failure of the southern face of Mount Steward and led to the temporary damming of the Leader River. The dam has since been partially eroded, and the river has undergone significant morphological adjustments.

This field experience was particularly valuable as these areas are not normally accessible to the public and were visited under the guidance of expert geomorphologists.

Fig. 2 – Landslide along the Leader River triggered by the 2016 Kaikōura Earthquake.

Day 4 – 5th February

On this day, I attended several sessions addressing different aspects of geomorphology, including discussions on heritage geomorphology and landscape sensitivity in the context of global change.

I presented a poster entitled “Using vegetation-based spectral indices as indicators of slope sensitivity to rainfall: a case study from the Northern Apennines, Italy” at the session “Landscape sensitivity and global change”, held in memory of Prof. Denys Brunsden. Presenting my research in a session

dedicated to his memory was particularly meaningful for me, given his fundamental contributions to landslide research.

Day 5 – 6th February

The final day included two plenary lectures: (i) “Integrating the wood regime in rivers across multiple scales: insights from the Swiss Alps” by Virginia Ruiz-Villanueva, (ii) “The climate of Australia during the Last Glacial Maximum” by Tim Barrows.

I also attended the 2nd IAG General Assembly, during which the Early Career Medal was awarded to Edward Park (Singapore), who delivered a highly motivating and inspiring speech. The Assembly was particularly emotional, as Italy was officially announced as the host country for the next IAG International Conference in 2030.

Day 6 – 7th February

The day after the Conference, I attended the “Submarine geomorphology mapping workshop” organized under the framework of the International Seabed Geomorphology Mapping Working Group. The workshop included hands-on experiences on automatic submarine mapping and landform classification. It represented a valuable opportunity to acquire practical skills and to broaden my methodological perspective in geomorphological mapping.

Concluding Remarks

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the IAG for awarding me the grant, which made my participation in this Conference possible.

The Conference and the related activities represented an outstanding opportunity for scientific exchange, professional growth, and international networking within a friendly atmosphere.