

Earthquake hits Newcastle: Eyewitness account

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

On Thursday 28 December 1989, an earthquake hit the city of Newcastle. Eyewitness reports from the area have estimated that the area shook for around five seconds and caused extensive damaged to buildings in the area.

Local authorities have confirmed that over 40,000 buildings have been damaged or destroyed. Shopkeepers and residents have been shocked by the damage caused, with many buildings showing signs of minor damage and others with severe damage. Some residents stated that their neighbourhoods looked like a cyclone had hit it but most tuned into local radio stations to find out the real cause of the destruction.

One shopkeeper was saddened to report that most of the damage seemed to be to older buildings, some of which were over 100 years old, with a long history in the community.

A resident has told how she was talking to a friend and all of a sudden felt the ground shaking with glassware and crockery rattling and falling off the shelves. Other residents have commented on how cracks started to appear in the walls of their homes.

Despite the extensive damage to buildings, major infrastructure, such as railway tracks and telephone lines were not badly damaged.

A local seismologist has reported that the earthquake measured 5.6 on the Richter scale. He has also commented that Australia experiences strong earthquakes like these around every 18 months but they rarely happen in populated areas and have little effect on people and communities. Because this particular earthquake hit a city with buildings and infrastructure, it was estimated to have caused about \$4 billion damage.

Members of nearby towns have reported to have felt the shaking, with scientists confirming that the shaking was felt up to 600 kilometres away from the epicentre of the earthquake.

