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This talk will discuss how assemblage theory provides a useful theoretical basis for analysing disasters temporally. Discussion will centre around the idea of the 'Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Assemblage' (Donovan, 2017; McGowran and Donovan, 2021). The DRM Assemblage is conceptualised in two distinct but connected forms. The first is as an overarching analytical tool or conceptual approach that can be used to investigate the drivers of emergent disaster risk. The second form is the idea of DRM Assemblages as objects of study themselves. In the latter conceptualisation, DRM Assemblages are the constellations of policies, institutions, ideas, and actors that 'manage' – but also contribute to – disaster risk. A DRM Assemblage approach incorporates well-established ideas from assemblage thinking on non-linearity, interconnected-ness and the more-than-human nature of the world (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011), but also trains the researcher's focus towards futures (Adam and Groves, 2007) and/or 'disasters (McGowran and Donovan, 2021) 'in-the-making'. Looking backwards, this approach helps researchers to unpick how past disasters emerged from the relationships between political and economic decisions, physical processes, and the vulnerabilities of those affected (Wisner et al., 2003). For the purposes of studying present and future disasters, the idea of disasters-in-the-making can aid in investigating and explaining how present decision-making (or lack thereof) is contributing to as yet unmaterialised disasters-in the making. The idea also speaks to the critical literature on emergency governance that explores how states – amongst other institutions – 'make' imaginaries of disaster in order to further political agendas and reinforce power relations (Adey and Anderson, 2012; Agamben, 2005). Empirical examples from the literature will be used as explanatory tools throughout.

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Anticipatory governance – Dealing with uncertain futures