

## NZAIA Convenor's Report 2008

The last 12 months have been comparatively uneventful, after the turbulence of the previous two years. In many ways the Association has been consolidating its new, stripped down, look: the annual conference is our main activity, with the email list the primary means of disseminating information about impact assessment matters to the membership, and beyond.

An early start was made on the 2008 conference after the theme was suggested at the last AGM. Some good early progress was made, but again there was a loss of momentum at critical stages which slowed progress in securing a slate of speakers, and delayed publicity. However, we had an effective group working on the Nelson conference, and in my role as convenor I'd like to thank them on behalf of the Association: Nick Taylor, Hamish Rennie, Michelle Thompson-Fawcett, Rob Greenaway, James Newell, and Jennifer Lamm, with additional input from Pat Reid and Anna Wolterbeek.

One significant event this year was the IAIA meeting in Perth in May, which a number of NZAIA members were able to attend. It was particularly fitting, as Nick Taylor began his three year stint on the IAIA Board of Directors after the AGM in Perth, serving in his first year as President-elect. Nick will step into the 12 month President position after the AGM in Accra, Ghana, next year.

The Perth organisers secured funding from the Australian government to support the attendance of a group of Pacific participants at the Perth conference. As a result of that, I have been able to re-build links with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and promote the idea that NZAIA has a role to play in helping to encourage and mentor an impact assessment practitioner community in the Pacific region. This could prove important in the coming year. The SPREP Environment Officer, Tapa Suaesi, is keen to bring Pacific island practitioners together, probably in Fiji, during 2009, to promote the development of a professional network. This could well be an opportunity for NZAIA to lend a hand, especially with a number of members having Pacific experience. Given Nick Taylor's IAIA position, this could also be a great chance to boost the development of IA in the Pacific with some well timed, and targeted, support from IAIA.

In a similar vein, we will need to think about the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Asia-Pacific HIA Network which is due to be held in New Zealand in February 2010, hosted by the HIA Unit of the Ministry of Health. I have made some tentative inquiries about NZAIA having a role to play in this meeting, and received a positive response. Now might be a good time to think through just what we are prepared to commit to, and what we want to get out of the event; I'm sure planning for the 2010 event will move quickly after the completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting due to take place in Thailand 8-10 December this year.<sup>1</sup>

I had a brief email exchange with Judith Roper-Lindsay recently. She is no longer the President of the New Zealand chapter of EIANZ, having handed over to Tom Burkitt in August<sup>2</sup>. However, she is still very much involved with EIANZ activities and raised two particular items in her email which I need to bring to the members attention:

*I attended the EIANZ annual conference in Melbourne and Special Interest Sections were considered. Which*

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1 The HIA meeting was postponed due to the closure of Bangkok airports in December 2008; it is now scheduled to take place in the third week of April 2009.

2 Tom has been in touch by email (January 2009) and we will look to continue discussions on the relationship between NZAIA and EIANZ

*raised the local/NZ question regarding progress with my discussions with you about our groups coming together in some way. Does NZAIA have any views on our ideas?*

There is a Special Interest Section on EIA in the EIANZ, driven more by the Australian members as I understand things. There have been suggestions from a few New Zealand members of EIANZ that this might provide a mechanism for organising co-operative activities between NZAIA and their special interest group members..

The second item Judith raised is this:

*EIANZ agreed to scope the preparation of some Ecological Impact Assessment guidelines (using the IEEM model), and I will be starting that process soon - obviously part of that process will involve talking to impact assessment professionals as well as ecologists. So, I hope to be in touch again about that once we have a process sorted out to find the best way of getting NZAIA and individual inputs - if there is someone else that you think would be a more appropriate contact, please let me know .....*

This is a very important initiative, and it will be vital to ensure sound impact assessment thinking goes into the guidelines. It would also be a useful vehicle to develop co-operative links with EIANZ members locally.

It would be useful to have some direction from the AGM as to what might be the most appropriate responses to these overtures.

Finally my thanks to a particularly committed and supportive Core Group this year. All the meetings have involved teleconferences, with all CG members on the end of a phone, in various parts of the country. This has worked very effectively, not least because of the enthusiasm and good humour of all the people involved. And Jamie Newell again deserves special thanks for continuing the good fight to get our accounting systems in order, our auditing needs met (and modified to be easier in future), and generally keeping NZAIA operating as a registered charitable NGO.

**Richard Morgan** Convenor, NZAIA

25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008