

Issue 51, March 2000

CONVENOR'S REPORT

Introduction

In taking over the role of convenor from Gerard Fitzgerald, I am aware that I am a comparative stranger to many in the Association. Therefore a little background may be useful by way of introduction. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Otago, and by training a biogeographer: much of my undergraduate teaching and some of my graduate research interests focus on the study of human impacts on soil and vegetation (although I also have a strong interest in the social aspects of human impacts on environment!). However, since 1980 I have followed the changing fortunes of impact assessment in New Zealand and, in later years, internationally. In the early 1990s I made the decision to focus my academic activities primarily on impact assessment, developing teaching and research programmes on impact assessment in New Zealand and the South Pacific, writing a text book, and establishing the Centre for Impact Assessment Research and Training (CIART) at the University. Since 1993 I've been involved with the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) and I have had the opportunity to work on impact assessment training and development in the South Pacific over the last decade, the most recent project being to assist Samoan government staff to develop national EIA guidelines.

It is obvious, then, that my interests in impact assessment are long-standing, but also that they range across the impact assessment spectrum, from social to biophysical aspects. This latter characteristic is of particular importance for NZAIA. I take over as convenor at a time when the Association is consolidating its change from being a social impact group to being a group that represents the full spectrum of the impact assessment community in New Zealand. This presents many challenges to the Association but is a process that can be faced with confidence because of the strong tradition and strong organisational culture inherited from the ASA. My task, as I see it, is to work with others in the NZAIA, especially those in the Core Group, to help establish the Association in its new guise.

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Note from the editor

This issue of the NZAIA Newsletter focuses on NZAIA reports from 1999 and plans for this current year. We also feature a commentary on SEA (strategic environmental assessment) in the UK. We hope to have further articles relating to SEA in later issues this year.

We are looking for issues co-ordinators for future issues. The role of issue co-ordinator is of great assistance to the production team. It helps spread the workload of gathering material for the newsletter, and it also helps to ensure a range of views, news and ideas are included. We try to develop each newsletter around a theme. So if you have any ideas for a theme, or would like to co-ordinate material for one of the issues this year, please get in touch.

Sponsors for an issue would also be of great assistance to the finances of the Association (see report below). Please let us know if your organisation might be interested in sponsoring an issue.

Nick Taylor

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Production team for this issue

Editor: Nick Taylor

Reviews editor: Wayne McClintock

Production / layout: Chris Cosslett

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The challenge

The basic challenge is one of institution building. NZAIA needs to become recognised as the champion of impact assessment in New Zealand, promoting its use where appropriate, throughout the public and private sectors, and promoting and facilitating continuous improvement in impact assessment practices.

To be effective, then, the Association must be able to show that its membership is drawn from across the community of impact assessment practitioners, and that it does indeed reflect the experiences and views of that community. It also needs to have an audience, and a message. The former is wide, comprising any group or individual involved with the development of policies, programmes, plans, or projects that might have significant effects on the social and/or biophysical environment.

Virtually all central government agencies, together with regional and district authorities, plus the public and private sector resource developers (from major corporations to the local builder) fall into this category. All should routinely consider, and respond to, the environmental implications of their proposals during the development of those proposals.

How can NZAIA reach this diverse audience? The Association needs a strategy to guide the development of its links with the many different agencies, groups and individuals. The various means for communicating with those agencies or groups must also be considered: perhaps we can get an NZAIA member onto a committee, or we might send the newsletter to key contacts in organisations. Communication takes many forms and we might use the annual conference to reach a particular sector of the IA community. And of course the membership itself is part of that communication process; members who work in one of the “target” areas might wish to develop their own strategy for spreading the word about NZAIA and its mission. The important point is that a clear strategy needs to be implemented to manage the communication process, if NZAIA is to be heard by the people that need to hear our message.

And what is our message? This is a critical question to answer as it strikes at the heart of what NZAIA stands for. Certainly we have a set of objectives as an organisation, but what we need others to hear can probably be summarised as: “use the impact assessment process when it is appropriate, and do it as well as you can!” This leads on to many issues about the reasons for using impact assessment, and how to practise it for best effect. NZAIA is the one organisation that can promote impact assessment and encourage better practices across all the potential areas of application, which is important for two reasons.

First, impact assessment is a generic process, the main components of which are transferable across sectors. Equally there are cross-cutting issues that people from widely differing areas of interest will identify

with, such as how to communicate technical information effectively to stakeholder groups and the wider public, and how to carry out effective scoping exercises.

Second, there is a real danger that without communication between sectors, practitioners work in relative isolation, fail to learn from each other, and start to re-invent the wheel (only to end up with a square one!). In many ways, AEE practices in many parts of this country can be seen as having evolved in isolation from established impact assessment principles, with significant implications for the quality of the information generated and for the overall effectiveness of the process. NZAIA can provide that communication network, facilitating the transfer of innovative methods and techniques, as well as helping to set broad standards for impact assessment practices in New Zealand.

A programme for the Association in 2000

So what can be achieved this year? At the Auckland conference of NZAIA last December, the Saturday morning was used to conduct an indaba (or “open space”) session. This allowed individual participants to nominate discussion topics, so that themes of interest to wider sections of the audience could be distinguished. As will be reported in the conference overview (to be sent out within a few weeks), two key themes emerged: how to achieve integrated impact assessment; and building capacity for impact assessment in New Zealand. The discussions were wide ranging, and in the case of the second theme, a great many issues were raised dealing with practical aspects of the Association’s activities.

Summaries of these discussions, in the form of simple network diagrams or idea maps, were used by members of the Core Group during further discussions in December and more recently in early February this year. A number of activities emerged from the discussions, and more will continue to be identified over coming months as we establish a programme of work for the year.

A simple first step, and one that is already underway, is to identify a set of good practice principles for impact assessment in New Zealand that will serve as the core of the message that NZAIA wishes to disseminate. This can be put into the Association’s brochure to be used by its members when making contact with agencies, interest groups, or individuals. It will also be placed on the NZAIA web site (www.nzaia.org.nz).

Related to this is the development of a “tertiary education group” within the Association, to begin the task of identifying existing tertiary courses on impact assessment (and related themes), and to establish a network between the various people and institutions responsible for those courses. Once the links have been made, we

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can begin to look at just what is taught, to whom, and in what ways, in order to identify gaps in impact assessment education, areas of possible improvement, and ways of assisting each other in developing more effective courses. We are also keen to involve more students in the activities of the Association, as a way of infusing energy and new ideas on a regular basis. To help with this, the Core Group will now have a student representative.

The conference later this year is, potentially, a valuable tool in the process of developing the new profile for NZAIA. A small group is already working on the practical arrangements for the conference, in terms of where and when it will be held. However, it will be important to see this as an opportunity to provide something that will be of relevance to wider sectors of the impact assessment community. That in turn will reinforce the Association's claim to be the body responsible for advocating the cause of impact assessment.

Linked with this is the need to attract new members from the wider impact assessment community. One key task of the Core Group this year will be the development of strategies for contacting potential members in efficient and cost effective ways, perhaps through articles placed in professional newsletters, or by disseminating information leaflets at key conferences. Once again, existing members can also be very effective in disseminating information about the Association within their workplaces, interest groups, or communities. Further development of the NZAIA web site is planned which will also serve as the Association's shop window, and will encourage visitors to the site to become members.

Equally important will be maintaining contact with the membership as it grows and becomes more diverse in terms of disciplinary backgrounds, interests, etc. One obvious answer will be to promote the use of the NZAIA email list (see details elsewhere in this newsletter); every member of the Association should be a subscriber to the list (though the reverse is not always the case, especially with overseas subscribers). Then information can be disseminated very quickly. More importantly, however, the list can become the main discussion arena for people with questions, problems, or concerns about impact assessment in New Zealand. It would be a very useful forum, for example, for feedback on the issues raised in this report!

There is also renewed interest in regional groupings within NZAIA, as a way of consolidating interest in impact assessment through more frequent local activities throughout the year. One thing we might con-

sider doing is to identify regional co-ordinators who can help organise those activities, but also maintain contact nationally through the newsletter and the email list.

Finally, we need to start developing a proactive role for NZAIA. For example, what should the Association be doing this year to encourage the new Labour Government to implement its manifesto pledge to introduce environmental assessment of all government policies? Or, what is the role of the Association in commenting on obvious and high profile examples of the failure to use impact assessment at all, or the failure to use it properly? What mechanisms do we need to introduce to ensure well-argued NZAIA submissions are made to select committees?

All of these tasks are part of the wider process of establishing NZAIA as the voice of impact assessment in New Zealand, and creating an effective institution capable of fulfilling that role. There are many other issues that could have been touched on, but for the pressures of space. It would be most valuable to hear other people's ideas on what might be done to achieve some of the objectives mentioned above, so please put your ideas on the NZAIA list for other subscribers to read and comment on. If you are not yet a subscriber, please do join the list as soon as you can.

I must emphasise that the views set out above represent my own perspective of the current position of the Association and where it might go from here. It provides me with a structure, to underpin my year as convenor. But it is not the only perspective, and I cannot expect everyone to necessarily agree with the ideas I have put forward, nor the implied priorities for Association's work this year. However, one thing the NZAIA has retained from the ASA is a tradition for robust discussion and debate and I am happy to put forward these comments, secure in the knowledge that they will stimulate such debate and, ultimately, help identify an agreed way forward for the next year or more.

Before finishing, I would like to thank all those responsible for managing the NZAIA through its first formal year of operation, and in particular last year's office holders. Of these special mention should be made of Jamie Newell's efforts, aided by Anne Duncan, in dealing with the detail of setting up new administrative systems, transferring files and so forth that marked the real world transition from the ASA to NZAIA.

Richard Morgan

Past Convenor's Report for the 1999 Year

Transition Activities

During 1998 the Association for Social Assessment decided the time had come to broaden the scope of the organisation from focusing primarily on social assessment to include environmental assessment and environmental change. This also followed logically from the ASA's position as the de facto chapter of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). This led to proposals to make appropriate amendments to the constitution of the ASA, including the new name the New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment Inc. These amendments were adopted at the 1998 AGM, and the NZAIA came into being. As expected, much of the work since then has focussed on making the transition and keeping the new Association ticking. Indeed, the overall goal for 1999 was: "to transform our organisation into one which fully represents both environmental and social assessment communities in order to improve practice and raise the organisation's profile".

In keeping with our goal and nine objectives, a lot of work has gone into establishing the identity and presence of the AIA, for which we are particularly grateful to Jamie Newell, our secretary. Some of the achievements have included:

- Development of a beautiful new logo, for use on stationery, the newsletter, and the website.
- Registration of an internet domain name, and development of a website providing access to information about the Association, membership, minutes of Core Group meetings, conference details, and submissions on legislation.
- Establishment of a list server hosted by Richard Morgan and Otago University.
- A revamp of the newsletter, including a new name (IANZ: Impact Assessment New Zealand).

These developments were designed to provide greater access to the Association and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, and have proven very successful. As yet, the list server has showed little activity, however this should grow as the New Zealand and overseas impact assessment community learns about the value of open and inter-disciplinary exchanges on environmental issues.

Core Group

The main task of the convenor is to facilitate meetings and the operation of the Core Group. Since the Core Group is made up of extremely experienced and committed members, and our secretarial team is well organised, my task has been pretty straightforward. Most of the day-to-day communications have been by email and this works well.

The Core Group met six times in the past year. All meetings were held in Wellington at the offices of MERA, consistently had good turnouts, and got through the business effectively. Membership has been pretty consistent, and during the year Pam Williams, an environmental educator, joined the group. The Core Group also successfully experimented with teleconferencing for its last two meetings, and this should help keep our travel costs down in future. In July, Ann Pomeroy took over from Margie Scotts as Treasurer.

The work of the Association was greatly facilitated by having a part-time administrative assistant. The previous assistant, Hattie de Vris resigned early in the year due to study and family commitments, and since Anne Duncan's appointment in March, the business of the Association has flowed smoothly.

Outreach Activities

The principal outreach activity of the Association is the newsletter. This year Nick Taylor took on the overall editorship, and with the help of guest "issue" editors, managed to make a successful move from SIAN to IANZ. Thanks to Nick and all contributors.

One of the objectives of the Association for 1999 was to participate in and support forums and activities which focus on bringing together environmental and social assessment. In this regard the Association organised a session at the Association of Asia-Pacific Social Science Research Councils' one-day seminar on social and environmental sustainability, in August. Members also presented papers, and the proceedings have been published. In addition, representatives of the Association attended or made presentations at, among other events:

- the Centre for Advanced Engineering' conference on the assessment of environmental effects (March),
- the joint Australia-NZ Social Assessment Practitioner' workshop at Mt Nebo, Queensland (July),
- the International Symposium on Society and Resource Management in Brisbane (July)
- the IAIA Conference in Glasgow (July), and
- the Resource Management Law Association Conference (September).

In addition, in keeping with our goal of promoting and applying impact assessment, 1999's conference theme is "Improving Practice in Integrated Impact Assessment" and was organised to be relevant for, and make input to, local Auckland issues and the organisations grappling with them. We were fortunate in having Hobson Bryan, the president of the IAIA, here as our guest at this conference. The Association's thanks go to Marilyn Stephens and Tom Fookes for their work on the Conference organisation.

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In terms of regional activities, not much has happened this year. The Christchurch group has not been able to get cranked up again after last year's marathon effort on the IAIA conference. In this regard, it would seem appropriate that the Association look at appointing and resourcing regional co-ordinators with the task of organising regional gatherings according to an agreed plan. This would help promote the Association among local bio-physical resource managers, local government planners and officers, relevant government agencies, and consulting firms, all somewhat under-represented in our organisation so far, and yet crucial to the Association's development.

The Association prepared two submissions on proposed changes to the Resource Management Act. The first of these was prepared by Nick Taylor and myself in response to the Minister's "proposals" document, and the second by myself and Chris Cosslett on the subsequent Resource Management Act Amendment Bill. Thanks to Martin Ward for his help with both these exercises.

One of the objectives for the year was to take advantage of opportunities for politically lobbying on impact issues and relevant policy. It would seem that the coming year will present such opportunities, and better chances of getting a reasonable hearing. However our long-term ability to influence thinking and policy depends on aggressive development of the Association, and especially the involvement of mainstream environmental and social impact assessment practitioners.

Overall, the Association has achieved almost all its goals for the year, a testament to realistic planning! My congratulations and thanks to the members of the core group for their efforts and commitment, and especially those who took on particular responsibilities and tasks throughout the year.

Gerard Fitzgerald

NZAIA CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

This year's conference will be held somewhere in the greater Wellington area at the end of October/beginning of November. The main theme of the conference will be "growing the influence of impact assessment practices". At this stage, themed sessions are envisaged in the following areas:

1. Methodologies
2. Having it all – trees, jobs and strong communities
3. Local government
4. Central government – exploring ways of using impact assessment methods in policy development.

The organisers are interested in ideas from the broader membership on the ideas for themed sessions and offers from people willing to contribute a short paper to a panel discussion. Please forward your ideas to Maire Dwyer – maire@actrix.gen.nz or fax 04 3850422.

Watch this space for more details in the next newsletter.

NZAIA LISTSERVER

Using the NZAIA list

To use the list server and participate in discussions on it, you must first "subscribe". To do this, take the following steps:

1. send an email message to: list-proc@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
2. as the body of the message (not the subject) give the following command: `subscribe NZAIA <your personal name>` For example:
`subscribe NZAIA Leonardo da Vinci`

To unsubscribe from the list:

1. send an email message to: list-proc@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

2. as the body of the message (not the subject) give the command: `unsubscribe NZAIA`

To post a message to the entire discussion group, send an email to:
NZAIA@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Please be sure to include a concise, clear subject in the subject line. **Note: only subscribers can post to the list.**

Assistance

If you have problems with the list, error messages will automatically be sent to the list manager. Should you need to contact the list manager about anything, please email Richard Morgan at: rkm@geography.otago.ac.nz

SECRETARY'S REPORT

NZAIA ended the year with a paid-up membership of 154, probably the highest membership ever. The 1999 Conference was well attended even with the timing so close to Christmas. We did have some anxious moments as registrations rolled in at the eleventh hour (as is often the case). The 1999 NZAIA Conference brought together about 45 paying participants and about 30 others involved in specific sessions, presenting or university participants. The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy was a major focal point and was very professionally presented by the various local government officers involved in the process. The combination of the big picture at the Regional level with the detail of implementation presented through local case studies was a successful one and the subject raises a lot of food for thought and discussion.

The Department of Planning at Auckland University, the Auckland Regional Council and other local authorities are especially to be thanked for their contributions to the programme or the conference organisation. Many thanks especially to Associate Professor Tom Fookes and Marilyn Stephens for their work on the Conference organisation.

The traditional evening social-cum-sing-along was very successful with some very international contributions from some of the students at the conference. The singing maintained our usual standards of enthusiasm led by Paul Lister and Chris Cosslett, although a number of our group were uncharacteristically quiet the following morning! This is probably because those persons used up their voice in the evening sing-a-long.

The 1999 Annual General Meeting of NZAIA elected a new core group and convenor. The details of the new core group are as follows:

Dianne Buchan	office@corydon.co.nz	
Chris Cosslett	office@corydon.co.nz	Newsletter Production
Virginia de Joux	virginia.dejoux@xtra.co.nz	
Maire Dwyer	maire@actrix.gen.nz	Year 2000 Conference Co-ordinator
Gerard Fitzgerald	fitzgerald@clear.net.nz	Christchurch Regional Representative
Jennifer Hand	jennifer@ahsl.co.nz	
Ned Hardie-Boys	ned@doc.govt.nz	
David Hill	d.hill@hyc.co.nz	Auckland Regional Representative
Paul Lister	paul.lister@minedu.govt.nz	
Richard Morgan	rkm@hyperperth.otago.ac.nz	Convenor
James Newell	jnewell@mera.co.nz	Secretary
Ann Pomeroy	ann.pomeroy@dsw.govt.nz	Treasurer
Marilyn Stephens	marilyn.stephens@parliament.govt.nz	
Nick Taylor	n.taylor@tba.co.nz	Newsletter Editor
Martin Ward		
Julie Warren	julie@cresa.co.nz	
Pam Williams	pamwilliams@xtra.co.nz	
Susanne Rose	s.rose@soci.canterbury.ac.nz	Student Representative

The Indaba or open space session on Saturday morning generated a lot of useful creative and strategic thinking, as always. This included some brainstorming on where impact assessment is at in New Zealand – this material is written up fully in the conference report which should be available within the next three to four weeks. The diagram on the following page was produced by part of the Indaba session. It provides a summary of some of the strategic possibilities for NZAIA.

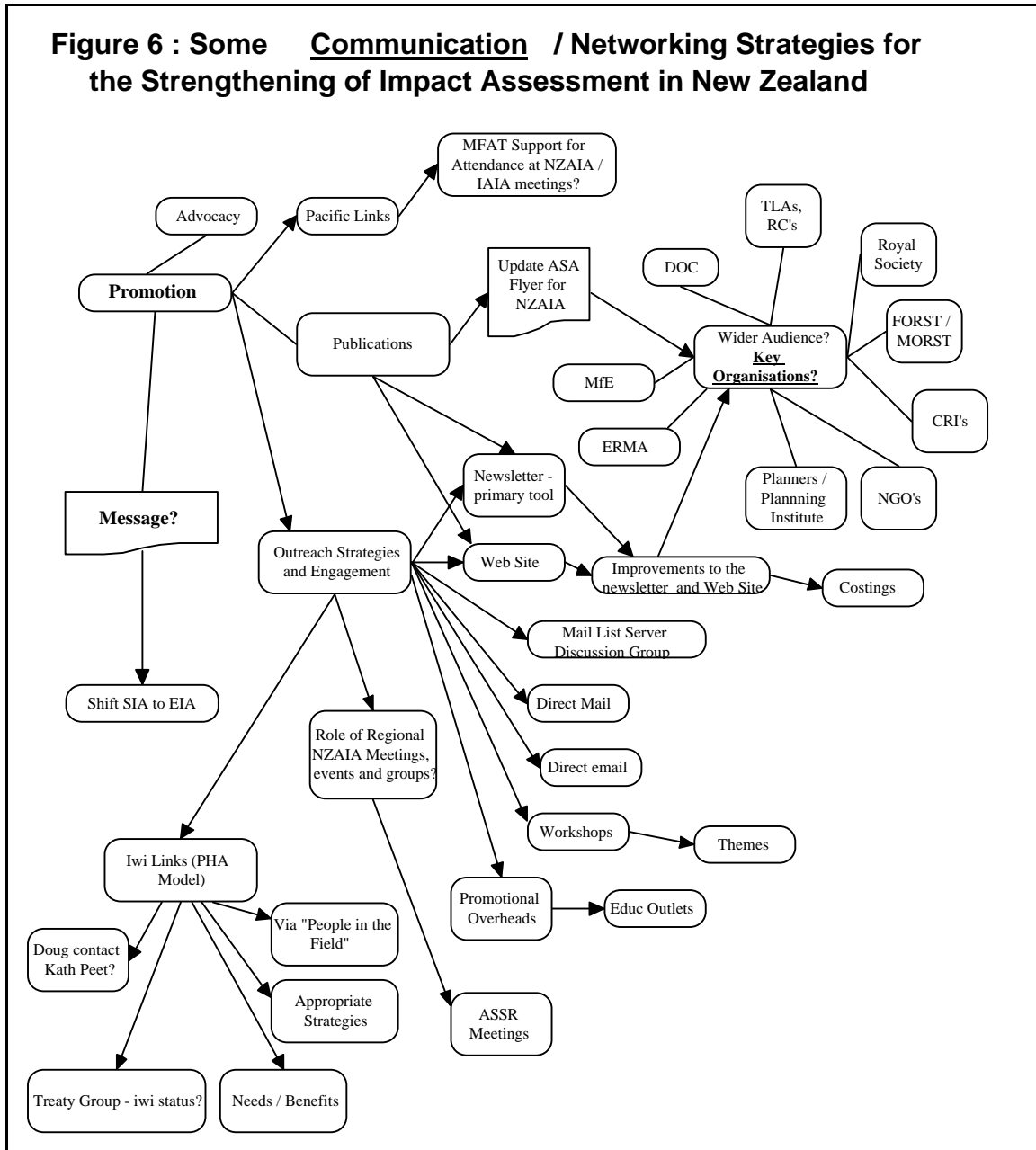
I am in the process of setting up a members' section on the web site. Once established, it will provide restricted access to some parts of the web site for members only. I expect that we will look at providing the current IANZ newsletter in a members'-only section.

Tom Davies, a PhD student at Canterbury University, has offered to help with the web site this year.

Anne Duncan, NZAIA's part-time administrative assistant, has resigned because of family commitments. I would like to thank Anne for her contribution in 1999. She was a hard working and conscientious administrator and it won't be easy to get someone else of her calibre to carry on the job. NZAIA is looking for someone else based in Wellington to take over this paid part time job. Please contact me if you are interested.

James Newell
sec@nzaia.org.nz

The following diagram was a product of the Indaba session held at the conference. It provides a summary of some of the strategic possibilities for NZAIA. The core group is interested in feedback on this diagram. If you have any suggestions, please contact Jamie Newell (details on previous page).



Treasurer's Report for 1999

During the 1999 year Margie Scotts was unable to continue as Treasurer, so I have helped out with the preparation of the 1998 accounts.

In 1998 the Association made a slim profit of \$218. This was largely due to the success of the one-day 1998 conference in Wellington (thanks to Jamie Newell and Paul Lister) which netted just over \$2,000. The main expenditure items in 1998 were for the following agreed initiatives:

- administrative services;
- development and operation of a website (and thanks to Jamie Newell for the investment of considerable time into getting this set up); and
- meeting expenses.

The outcome of this expenditure has been a dramatic increase in membership (which increased income by just over \$1,000 from the previous year) and more time spent on developing strategic objectives. This culminated in our transformation into the Association of Impact Assessment, as agreed by members at the 1998 AGM. The 1999 AGM approved the 1998 accounts pending audit.

Following decisions made at the 1998 AGM, expenditure in 1999 has supported the re-figuring of the association and a concentrated membership drive. We had hoped to make a small profit from the 1999 conference in Auckland, but it is likely that this may only break even, so that overall we are looking at a loss of around \$4,000 for the year. Communications and administration continue to be our largest items of expenditure, but we can expect administration costs to be lower in 2000 as systems become streamlined. We saved a little on meeting costs with the switch to conference calls instead of travel for out-of-town people, and thanks to core group representatives who combined their travel with other business in Wellington.

With our broadened emphasis we need to consider seeking donations and financial input from organisations such as the Ministry for the Environment in 2000, including sponsorship for the newsletter, as well as continuing with the membership drive.

As at February 2000 I estimate our financial reserves to be around \$6,000 (down from \$10,000 in 1998).

Ann Pomeroy

COMMENTARY: A PERSPECTIVE ON STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IN THE UK

Dr Tom Fookes (Planning Dept., University of Auckland)

A recent period of study leave gave me an opportunity to look at the practice of Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) in the United Kingdom (UK). I also have some information on the European Commission and related countries but that will have to wait for another article. Suffice to say that there is a lot of interest in broadening the application of Environmental Impact Assessment (or EIA) from its base of project assessment. In this extension we find the language changing to the assessment of "(the) environmental impact of policies, plans and programmes" (Therivel 1997). A "programme" refers to "a set of projects in a particular area" (ibid). It is this shift to policies, plans and programmes that forms the basis for SEA.

Most of my reading in the UK took me back to the material reviewed by Therivel in the New Zealand published article (see *Planning Quarterly*, June 1997). As this is readily available to NZ readers I will not repeat her discussion. I will, instead, expand on it in terms of how developments since 1997 were explained to me.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Appraisal (EA) and Sustainability Appraisal

From discussions at the University of Manchester's EIA Centre (Prof. Chris Wood) it appears that two levels of assessment for policy, programmes and plans are now being applied. In other words, we have Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and also Environmental Appraisal (EA). EA sometimes regarded as a lesser form of assessment and has been defined as "a process of identifying, quantifying, weighing up and reporting on the environmental and other costs and benefits of the measures which are proposed" (source given as *Policy Planning Guidance* No.12[1992]). It is the EA process that Therivel talks about in her *PQ* 1997 article. In other words, SEA is being promoted for policy and programmes while EA is focused directly on the environmental assessment of plans.

To complicate things further there is now talk of "Sustainability Appraisal". This is an extension of EA but placed in the broader context of Sustainable Development. This shift has occurred because the UK Government has placed Sustainable Development centrally in its manifesto on environment, transport and regions (hence the establishment of the Department of Envi-

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ronment, Transport and Regions – DETR).

In my meeting with staff at DETR I gained the impression that SEA for policies and programmes was still being approached cautiously. There was an impression of not wanting to gallop in the direction being discussed by the European Commission, where SEA is being used by that organisation as a logical extension to their existing strategic planning processes. The UK position is one of cautious appraisal of SEA.

Environmental Appraisal (EA)

The UK is active in EA, where the government's guidelines present it as an appraisal where planners:

- have regard to environmental considerations in preparing their general policies and proposals, and
- demonstrate that environmental concerns have been fully integrated into the plan making process.

As far as the EA process goes the government's guidance (since 1993) simplifies it to:

- characterise the environment (using the categories of "global sustainability", "natural resources", and "local environmental quality");
- scope the plan (i.e. identify the environmental issues, establish consistency with central government and other relevant guidance, and set environmental targets and standards); and
- appraise the plan content (at various levels – strategic objectives, spatial strategy, policy impact, proposals impact).

In addition to the government's guidance, reference continues to be made to the work of Hertfordshire County Council in its EA of the Structure Plan. In particular this County worked on the basis of environmental criteria but also those for a consideration of quality of life issues – social, economic, cultural and spiritual, and a focus on public involvement. This approach certainly has an Agenda 21/Sustainable Development feel to it.

The framework applied by Hertfordshire links **strategy statements** with a set of **sustainability aims or criteria** (see Box 1).

Box 1: HERTFORDSHIRE C.C.: Scoping

Used "brainstorming" to address these questions:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- What is our strategy?
- What are the key things to keep in mind?

Came up with five strategy statements, which the strategy seeks to achieve:

- "to enable activities and development to be carried out in the most sustainable way"
- "to improve the overall quality of life"
- "to encourage people to make sustainable choices for the future"
- "to allow the same degree of choice for the future"
- "to contain consumption of, and damage to, natural resources" (p.32)

From the strategy a set of sustainability aims or criteria were developed (p.33):

- reduce overall demand for resources
- make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources
- increase the use of renewable resources
- increase the reuse and recycling of resources
- maintain biological diversity
- mitigate the possible effects of greenhouse gases on climate change
- increase the rate of carbon fixing
- reduce the effects of pollution
- maintain the capacity of land to renew itself
- maintain critical national and local issues
- maintain stock of less critical assets
- improve the overall quality of life
- ensure the basic needs are met
- increase community awareness and involvement
- improve equality of opportunity"

From the sustainability aims came structure plan objectives.

The Bedfordshire County Council, in its work on the Structure Plan 2011, illustrates the move to Sustainability Appraisal. The advantages of its approach have been summarised as follows:

- "A big advantage of the appraisal process is that potential environmental impacts are dealt with at a strategic level, before decisions on where to carry out detailed actions or development are taken."
- "It helps redress the major drawback of the project specific Environmental Impact Assessment system

(EIA), namely the latter's failure to account for the cumulative effects of individual projects."

- "A comprehensive appraisal also enables the environmental effects of different plan options or strategies to be analysed at an early stage in document preparation" (Bedfordshire County Council 1997, p.1).

The main aim of the Bedfordshire C.C. appraisal is Sustainable Development. Box 2 shows the main aim and related themes:

Box 2: Overall Aim – Sustainable Development

Theme		Meaning
Promoting Environmental Stewardship	1	Reducing the consumption of natural resources; including agricultural land, minerals and fossil fuels
	2	Reducing pollution; including CO2 emissions, water, air and soil pollution
	3	Protecting key natural assets; including wildlife, landscapes and heritage
	4	Enhancing the stock and variety of resources
	5	Improving the attractiveness of urban areas
	6	Developing integrated land use and transportation systems to reduce the need to travel
	7	Promoting a healthy environment
Enhancing Economic Opportunities	8	Providing opportunities for the creation of new and the expansion or relocation of existing businesses which will expand the diversity of the local economy
	9	Ensure best use is made of the County's economic resources; people, land and buildings
	10	Attracting inward investment into the local economy
Increasing Social Equity	11	Providing for local housing needs; including those necessary to meet special affordable housing needs
	12	Ensuring provision is made for those with special needs
	13	Promoting a safe environment
	14	Providing a full range of services and ensuring easy access to local facilities
	15	Giving priority to areas of high deprivation; specifically promoting regeneration in Luton areas and southern Bedfordshire

EA is also being applied in the context of the preparation of what is termed "Regional Planning Guidance". One part of this is termed "the sustainability appraisal of the RPG" which has been described as "the potential impacts of different strategic options in order to integrate sustainable development objectives in the formulation of plans" (cited by Chris Wood). Reference was made to the 1993 Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans: A Good Practice Guide.

Conclusion

The application of SEA to plans through the idea of an environmental or sustainability appraisal fits well into the New Zealand scene as we look more critically at our own plan-making process and the effectiveness of section 32 RMA. Where we need to reassess our position, however, is in the focus on "sustainable management". It was very noticeable in the UK that the

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breadth of their work was being aided by the government's adoption of "sustainable development" as its over-arching objective. I think this is the next stage for New Zealand if it is going to have holistic appraisals at a strategic level.

References

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HOME PAGE

Labour's Policies on the Environment on the Web

A new Government raises opportunities and challenges for NZAIA, to promote the wider application of impact assessment practices. Labour have a comprehensive web site at www.labour.org.nz and the environmental policies are laid out in detail there. Go direct via:

<http://www.labour.org.nz/InfoCentre1/Policies/environmentgroup.html>

The following are direct extracts from the stated policy, as published on the web in February 2000.

Between 1984 and 90 Labour created the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation and established the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment as an environmental watchdog. Labour remains committed to sustainability and to the principles of Agenda 21.

[The page summarises Labour Environmental policy under a number of headings, as follows:]

Government Leadership. Labour will:

- subject government policy to formal environmental assessment;
- expand the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.

Labour strongly supports the Resource Management Act. Some inconsistencies have arisen because National has failed to provide guidance and strategy.

RMA. Labour will:

- ensure that sustainable management continues to be the purpose of the RMA;

- support democracy in decision-making;
- split the present Resource Management Amendment Bill and bring back widely agreed amendments;
- determine the need for further amendments to:
 - improve access to and involvement in RMA processes;
 - streamline RMA processes where this does not threaten good environmental outcomes;
 - guide and support environmental sustainability;
 - develop national policy statements, in areas such as energy, Treaty issues, sustainable land management and tourism;
 - monitor local government and develop benchmarks for best practice;
 - review district plans to develop guidance on effective and lower cost planning and how to make plans more user-friendly;
 - ensure adequate mediation services are available;
- remove the barriers to public participation by:
 - enabling environmental and community groups and applicants to apply for legal aid at Environment Court hearings;
 - promoting and providing funding for a Community Environmental Advocates network.

Environmental education and public awareness.

Labour will:

- ensure that environmental education is integrated into the school curriculum;
- promote government-accredited environmental labelling.

Environmental performance. Labour will:

- ensure a significant increase in environmental research;
- progressively develop natural resource accounts so they can stand alongside our national accounts;

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- support and strengthen urban sustainability and develop urban environmental indicators.

Waste and pollution. Labour will:

- require all waste management to be on a full cost recovery basis and all landfills to meet high standards by 2010;
- aim for a 40% reduction in the solid waste stream by 2010;
- establish a New Zealand Waste Reduction Working Party to commission research, establish targets and advise government on promoting waste minimisation;
- require polluters to clean up contaminated sites and set up a clean-up fund for orphan sites;
- introduce a sewage treatment subsidy scheme for upgrades.

Sustainable Land Management. Sustainable land management is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of our land-based industries, and to protect our natural environment. Labour will:

- introduce a land care scheme similar to Labour's 1990 FARM Partnership scheme;
- promote sustainable land management, integrated pest management, safe agri-chemical use, biological controls and organic production, through support for education, research, marketing, and labelling initiatives.

Biosecurity. Labour will:

- substantially upgrade border biosecurity to prevent the accidental or illegal introduction of unwanted organisms;
- require mandatory and audited decontamination and inspection of used vehicle and machinery imports before they leave for New Zealand;
- keep a separate agency with a biosecurity focus rather than merging all border-related agencies.

Climate change and ozone. Labour will:

- set up an inquiry into the impact of climate change and ozone depletion;
- ratify the Kyoto Convention and promote targets for further greenhouse gas reductions;
- invest in and promote public transport;
- promote an accelerated phase out of ozone depleting chemicals.

Global environmental leadership. Labour will:

- work to extend the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and strongly oppose plutonium shipments;
- promote "greening" of the World Trade Organisation to ensure environmental concerns are properly considered.

[There is further detail of policy in relation to Conservation, Safe Food and a Healthy Environment, GMOs, Biosecurity and Indigenous Forests.]

For web sites on the other Government partners see www.alliance.org.nz and www.greens.org.nz

REVIEWS

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ACTION. David Robinson (ed.). Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. ISBN 0-908935-37-4. Paperback. 110 pp. 1999. \$25.00.

Reviewed by Wayne McClintock

In 1997 the Institute of Policy Studies published *Social Capital and Policy Development* which generated considerable debate about the concept of social capital and was reviewed in the March 1998 issue of SIAN. The present volume, *Social Capital in Action*, contains a series of papers from a workshop in August 1998 that examine the concept of social capital from a community perspective.

The contributors of the six articles in *Social Capital in Action* discuss three major themes: the strategies for using social capital, locality case studies and voluntary associations.

In the first section addressing the theme of strategies, Kara Puketapu of the Tu Tangata Enterprise Trust describes a programme developed by Maori that brings the community into the classroom by placing adults alongside students. He suggests that government funding should be channelled directly through voluntary agencies so communities can use "donated" social capital to manage and "own" their problems. Shalema Witten-Hanneh uses the West Coast Plan of Waitakere City as a case study to examine the relationship between social capital and community initiatives, and the role of social capital in collaborative planning processes. She maintains that unless community representatives are adequately resourced and empowered they will be unable to put the time and personal effort into the process that will make the plan a creative document that is "owned" and implemented by the community.

The second section contains locality case studies by John Cody and Marg Gilling. John Cody draws on the experiences of the Porirua Health Partnership, and

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recounts how it has utilised increased levels of social capital to improve its relationships with some key government agencies and promote community health activity in Porirua. Marg Gilling reports the findings of a MAF research project of farm families in Rangitikei. She notes that nowadays there are fewer people in the area with the expertise to lobby the bureaucracy on behalf of the community. Furthermore, there is no longer a pool of people to serve on community committees, and volunteers cannot afford the costs of transport or toll calls. Gilling concludes that the "social glue" that holds the Rangitikei community together has been weakened, and recommends that services now be provided by paid community workers.

In the final section of the book the focus moves from localities to voluntary associations. Florence Trout emphasises that the strength of the Plunket Society comes from its members and their networks into the wider community. These networks enable Plunket to offer holistic support to the families it serves by connecting them with other community organisations. Druis Barrett describes the activities of the Maori Women's Welfare League, and how changes in public policy have affected its programmes and the levels of trust between its branches and the national office. In particular, she explains how the current emphasis on contract outcomes in public policy has bound the

League to the government's agenda rather than a Maori agenda. In her view the government must facilitate sustainable development by promoting a strategy amongst its agencies that encourages autonomy within the community rather than dependence on the funding agency.

Social Capital in Action advances the debate about the role of social capital by a few hesitant steps from the realm of policy makers in Wellington to the interface between voluntary organisations and community. Its major focus is on the use of social capital rather than discovering the underlying nature of the concept. All those who work with voluntary organisations will find something of interest in its pages, and it provides interesting examples of how these organisations manage their relationships with funding agencies and the community.

Copies of this book may be obtained from the Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington (Phone: (04) 4715-307, Fax: (04) 4731-261 E-mail ipos@vuw.ac.nz).

REVIEWS REMINDER

We need books, reports or other publications to review. Please send a copy to our book review editor, Wayne McClintock, 37 Stour Drive, Burwood, Christchurch 9 (Phone: (03) 3833-784, E-mail: wayne@tba.co.nz).

BLACKBOARD

"Healthy Environments - The Local Challenge" is the 6th World Congress on Environmental Health, in Oslo, 5-9 JUNE 2000 and will be hosted by Forum for miljø og helse on behalf of The International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH). The deadline for submission of abstracts for posters is March 1, 2000. See <http://www.fmh.no>

IAIA '00. Back to the Future – where will impact assessment be in 10 years and how do we get there? The 20th annual meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment. Hong Kong, 19-23 June 2000. It's time to confirm those bookings now! James Baines of NZAIA is co-ordinating the Social Impact Assessment stream – if you are thinking of preparing a paper relating to SIA please contact him directly at j.baines@tba.co.nz. For general conference information, e-mail jhowell@ndsuent.nodak.edu or look at the IAIA website (access through the NZAIA website).

The Eighth International Symposium on Society and Resource Management, Transcending boundaries: natural resource management from summit to sea. Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, USA. June 17 – 22 2000. <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/issrm8th/>

European Rural Policy at the Cross-roads. An International Conference, 29 June - 1 July 2000, The Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, e-mail ark020@abdn.ac.uk See www.abdn.ac.uk/arkleton/

Cities on Volcanoes II. An international, interdisciplinary meeting to re-evaluate volcanic preparedness and management in cities and densely populated areas, Auckland, 12-16 February 2000. E-mail citieson-volc2@gns.cri.nz

