

# ISSUE 23, October 1990

The SIA Newsletter is compiled and published by members of the newly formed Association for Social Assessment (Inc.) and distributed free to SIA Network members. Its aim is to encourage contact and sharing of information between all those interested in social assessment in New Zealand. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their various employers.

**Communications to**  
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The editors welcome articles, news, reviews etc for inclusion in future newsletters. Contributions on *MacIntosh* or *MS-Dos* formatted disks are best, but not essential.

This issue was edited and typeset by James Newell in Wellington. It was proofed by Nick Taylor in Christchurch (by fax!), giving Gerard Fitzgerald (who was off on a field trip to Indonesia) a break. It was printed and distributed by the DSIR Social Science at Ilam, Christchurch, with the assistance of Nick Taylor & Associates.

## STOP PRESS :

The Association for Social Assessment incorporated late in August, following its inaugural meeting at the Hanmer workshop. The establishment of the Association as a formal replacement for the Social Impact Working Group has been slow but deliberate. You will find a membership form attached, along with a copy of the Association's aims and objectives, and ethical guidelines of the Association.

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# Association for Social Assessment (Inc.)

## *Hanmer Workshop*

**Dianne Buchan**

On Friday, 24 July 1990 about thirty energetic and enthusiastic people descended on the small South Island town of Hanmer for a 3 day workshop and inaugural meeting of the Association for Social Assessment. They had come from places as far away as Dunedin and Auckland but most were from Christchurch and Wellington. Their occupations included policy analysts, community development officers, land use planners and social impact assessors. Their employers included local, regional and central government agencies, area health boards, quangos and private consultancies.

The meeting was organised by the Social Impact Working Group and included: information sharing and workshops on specific subjects, a debate on the Association's constitution and the election of officers.

The workshops included panel discussions on the following:

- \* *issues associated with the inclusion of Maori perspectives in social impact assessments and policy formulation,*
- \* *the development and publication of guidelines for the use of social impact assessment in the practice of resource management (based on the provisions of the Resource Management Law Reform Bill),*
- \* *the use of the Checkland methodology for carrying out policy development and evaluation, and*
- \* *techniques for community consultation and conflict resolution*

Sunday was spent debating the draft constitution and a statement of ethics was agreed to. The purpose of the Association will be to promote the development of the practice of SIA and the encouragement of a high standard of practice among members in accordance with that code.

The following people were elected to the Core Group of ASA: Nick Taylor, Gerard Fitzgerald, George Lucking and Martin Maguire (all from Christchurch), Dianne Buchan, Maire Dwyer and James Newell (all from Wellington), and Doug Craig (Dunedin)/Heather Jonson (Cromwell) (the last two sharing).

Four subcommittees were established to deal with specific tasks, one of which, the finalisation of the Constitution convened by James Newell, has since completed its task and disbanded. The others, together with their convenors are:

- Organisation of training courses (Nick Taylor)
- Publication of SIAN (Gerard Fitzgerald)
- Promotion of SIA unit within central government, (Dianne Buchan)
- Preparation of a handbook on social assessment, (Nick Taylor)

## **ASA legally incorporated at last!**

The ASA was incorporated on the 28th of August.

**The first meeting of the core group was held in Wellington on the 27th of September. Responsibilities were allocated as follows, Secretary/Treasurer in James Newell, meeting convenor is Maire Dwyer, SIAN editors are (usually!) Gerard Fitzgerald and Nick Taylor, spokesperson and external relations (including SAA, IAI and NZPI) is Dianne Buchan.**

## **Meeting Dates and Venues Social Assessment Network**

The next network meeting is on November 15 at 9.30 pm in the third floor meeting room at the Wellington Regional Council. These are informal information sharing sessions.

They continue the format of the Social Impact Working Group gathering prior to the formation of ASA. One of the main features is a "round robin" whereby everyone present outlines what they are currently working on. A general discussion on any other subjects considered warranting more attention will follow. This might involve more detailed discussion or presentation of some recent work, or it might involve discussion of hot issues for those involved in Social Assessment.

## **ASA Core Group**

The next ASA core group meeting is at the same venue as above on the 15 November starting at 2 pm. Matters arising from the mornings network meeting might be considered, as well as general business.

Remember Treasury speak? Those words we have never heard of before or used in ways we never imagined they could be. All were spoken with such authority by blokes trying to reduce the deficit, balance the books and make us be more responsible about the way we spent our money. Some of us were scathing, some impressed, but most of us were just downright confused, which meant that these blokes tended to win every argument.

Don't despair. At the first meeting of the core group of the Association for Social Assessment, it was clear that at least one of our members was capable of leading the charge in the perpetration of a new language, which can more than match anything the economists have been dishing up. Here are a few choice extracts:

Core Group-	committee
Extensifying -	becoming more broad
Multifactorial problem	
-	a right wee mess
Neophobic -	fear of things new
Iterative -	moving forward and going back at the same time

Now Gerard Fitzgerald assures me that if I study the Readers Digest (or the speeches of the Prime Minister), I would know all these words and more. Well, I'm just grateful to Gerard for sharing this knowledge, and hopefully there will be more in the next edition.

You may also read the Readers Digest, or have made up some words to fill those many gaps we seem to have in our English language. If so, **do** send them in to the Editor of SIAN so that we can all learn them. One of the most impressive and effective aspects of "treasury speak" was that it was pervasive among economists which made it seem as if there was something wrong with us! So go to it team. Make the 1990's the decade of the sociologist. Learn one word of "Social Analyst Speak" every day. Remember it pays to increase your power words!

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

### SOCIAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

**Date:** Thursday, **6 December 1990** prior to the 1990 Conference of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa.

**Venue:** Lincoln University, Canterbury

**Theme:** Social Assessment in the 1990's - techniques and practice

It will begin at 10 am after tea/coffee, and continue into the evening. The programme will include a panel discussion on the theme "Information for Social Assessment in the 1990's : new technology, reformed local government, and RMLR" first thing. From late morning, there will be a series of parallel sessions, displays and small group discussions around the theme - "Techniques for Social Assessment in the 1990's : the state of the art".

A buffet lunch will be provided. From mid afternoon, a panel discussion will be held on the theme "Consultation and Public Involvement for Social Assessment in the 1990's". A Plenary Session will follow. A Social Impact Assessment Networking gathering will be held last thing in the afternoon. A buffet dinner will precede small interest group general meetings as required in the evening.

A registration form for the Social Assessment Workshop and SAA conference is attached. The workshop fee is \$60 for conference participants and \$70 for others. Further details are available from Colin Goodrich (Ph 03-3667001) or Nick Taylor (Ph 0502-38458)

## 1990 Conference of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (NZ)

**Dates:** Friday, 7 December to Sunday, 9 December 1990  
**Venue:** Lincoln University, Canterbury  
**Theme:** Transitions

Registration is 8.30-10 am on Friday, 7 December. The programme will conclude with Poroporoaki at 4.30 pm on Thursday, 9 December.

The sessions being held include :

**Deviance and Crime:** Greg Newbold, Sociology Dept., University of Canterbury

**Class:** David Thorns, Sociology Dept., University of Canterbury

**Ethnicity:** Paul Spoonley, Dept. of Sociology, Massey University

**History and Sociology:** Len Richardson, History Dept., University of Canterbury

**Gender and History:** Claire Toynbee, Dept. of Sociology and Social Work, Victoria University

**Rural Economy and Society:** John Fairweather, Agricultural Economics Research Unit, Lincoln University

**Politics and the State:** Kay Saville-Smith, Housing Corporation, Wellington & Geoff Fougere, Dept. of Community Health, Wellington Clinical School

**Health:** Val Walton, Dept. of Psychological Medicine, Otago Medical School

**Gender:** Allanah Ryan & Nicola Armstrong, Sociology Dept., Massey University

**Environment and Social Impact:** Colin Goodrich and Nick Taylor, Sociology Dept., University of Canterbury

**Family Policy:** David Swain, Dept. of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Waikato University & Peggy Koopman-Boyden, Sociology Dept., University of Canterbury

**Leisure, Recreation and Sport:** Rex Thompson, School of Physical Education, University of Otago

**Media and Communications:** John Farnsworth, School of Journalism, University of Canterbury

**Post-modernity:** Victoria Grace and Louis Arnoux, Dept. of Sociology, Massey University

A registration form is enclosed.

Preliminary registration for the **workshop and conference** can be made with:

**Mr Errol Costello,**

*Education Unit, Lincoln University, Canterbury*

Tel: (03) 252-8111, Fax: (03) 252-9444

If you have ideas or contributions for the workshop or preliminary ideas for papers for the main conference sessions, please contact Colin Goodrich, Department of Sociology, Private Bag, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, Tel: 667-001

## IAIA Conference 1991 USA

**Dates:** June 7-11, 1991

**Venue:** Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

**Theme:** Technology and Environmental Responsibility: A New Age for Impact Assessment

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) meeting will focus on the interplay of technological change, environmental assessment and societal values in determining future economic, social and environmental conditions. The location in central United States provides an opportunity to focus on reconciling relations between development, the environment and the role of technology.

Within the context of the overall theme, sessions will be organised around Subjects (e.g., technology assessment, ecological impact assessment), Policy and Institutional Aspects (eg international cooperation), Applications and Case Studies (eg impact of information technology), and Teaching and Training (eg curriculum development at educational institutions). Special thematic sessions on urban, rural, industrial, health, and global environmental issues will also be held. Persons wishing to present posters or papers or organise thematic sessions, panels, round tables, and workshops should submit a 200-400 word abstract in English or French by December 15, 1990 to:

F. Larry Leistritz, IAIA '91 Program Chair, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58105, USA: Ph 701-237-7455, Fax 701-237-8520

# Current Work and Issues

## State of the Environment Reporting in New Zealand

*The Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Statistics are currently investigating the feasibility and most appropriate shape and form of State of the Environment Reporting (SER) in New Zealand. Apparently, no decisions have yet been taken. A pilot study is proposed for 1991/92. The following is extracted from the promotional blurb on the project.*

*I am interested in bringing together ideas on the public/non statutory agency participation issues raised by this new initiative. I think that there are issues fundamental to Public Information Policy and to the outcome of Local Government Reform which are raised by these matters. If you have any thoughts on that score, please ring or write to me. -*

*James Newell, PO Box 1508, Wellington,  
Fax 04-791731, Ph 04-791649.*

State of the Environment Reporting (SER) is defined as the systematic analysis, description and presentation of credible, "scientifically based" information on environmental conditions and trends, and their significance to human relationships with the biosphere. SER is gaining increasing importance in assessing the health of the environment in other countries.

The objectives are:

1. To make all New Zealanders more aware of the complex interactions between themselves and the environment;
2. To anticipate and identify changes in the environment at an early stage to allow the maximum range of alternative options for action;
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of policies, practices and the behaviour of New Zealanders in every walk of life from an environmental perspective;
4. To encourage decision-making based on

sustainable use of the environment and natural resources.

One of the main purposes of SER is to facilitate exchange of existing information, rather than generate requirements for additional nation-scale type data collection. Specific monitoring programmes must be developed that investigate the cause and effect of disturbances in the environment. They must also be capable of distinguishing between human-induced and natural variations.

Part of the solution to environmental problems lies in making sure that the right information is available whenever and wherever people make decisions that affect the environment.

The RIGHT information shows:

- the current state of the relevant part of the environment;
- trends in the environment;
- the cause-effect relationship between human action and the environment that allows projections to be made about the environmental effects of the proposed decision.

Government departments, local government, manufacturers, business people, non-governmental organisations, members of professional organisations, elected representatives, farmers and land owners all make decisions which affect the health of the environment. Therefore, all have an essential role to play in State of the Environment Reporting, as suppliers and users of information.

If this proposal is greeted favourably, the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Statistics would have primary responsibility for developing the State of the Environment Reporting System for the New Zealand Government. Other state and private agencies are expected to contribute to this effort. But the success of the national programme will depend on the cooperation of everybody - users and suppliers of information alike.

**For further information, contact Mr Eddy Goldberg, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington, Ph (04) 498-7474 or Mr Jeff Sheerin, Department of Statistics, Private Bag, Wellington, Ph (04) 729-119.**

## Resource Management Law Reform Update

*Christina Wells*

The Resource Management Bill contains provisions that will see impact assessment integrated into the statutory consent and plan making process. The Bill proposes that all applications for consent be accompanied by a statement of the likely impacts of what is proposed on the environment. The Bill defines environment as including social and cultural conditions as well as the physical environment. The environmental results of policies and rules contained in resource management plans must also be documented by the authority proposing the plan. The Bill contains a schedule which lists the matters which should be considered when preparing an assessment.

The Bill did not complete its passage through the committee stages before the end of the last parliamentary session. It has been held over and will be taken up by the new government. Both the Labour and National Party's have resolved to pass the Bill if elected. The National Party has stated that it will establish a peer review panel to consider what changes are needed to the Bill.

## Priorities for Public Funded Science

*Paul Couchman*

We are entering a new, and uncharted, territory of science and technology policy reforms under the auspices of the Public Finance Act 1989 and the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology Act 1990. This new regime creates a framework which requires an explicit prioritisation process, and introduces a set of new terminology into the policy arena.

The Ministry of Research, Science and Technology is currently formulating priorities for the 1991/92 "public good" science funding round. Priorities are being set across the 40 science "output areas" (four of which are social science) and within outputs as priority themes. The outcome will be a paper to Cabinet. If the paper is accepted, it will determine the framework for the funds bidding process managed by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. As a first step in setting priorities, the Ministry has formulated (using a consultative process) a list of 25 "research goals" which link research outputs to Government's desired "outcomes". The Ministry is now engaged in relating the outputs to the

research goals and deriving priority indices which will signal funding changes in an area over time. The social sciences, represented as four output areas, are included in this process. However, there are a number of uncertainties about the new contestable funding process that make the setting of priorities difficult. Not least is the problem that around 80% of the social research performers in New Zealand will probably not be able to bid for funds because their institutions will be making no contributions to the pool! These are university social scientists and researchers in social policy departments who are doing "operational" (contributing to departmental outputs) rather than "output" research.

A small working party, convened by the Ministry, is making progress under these difficult conditions. An increase in the amount of funds available for social science has been recommended.

### Five priority research themes (which will receive preference in the bidding process) for the four output areas have been identified:

#### 25. NZ History, Society, Culture and Te Ao Maori Priority theme:

Studies that contribute to Iwi development, on maori social, cultural and economic issues.

#### 26. Social and Personal Development, Relationships and Well being Priority theme:

Studies on the inter-relationships between economic and social policy, with specific focus on the relationship between outputs purchased by Government and designated outcomes, and including the social implications of policy changes.

#### 27. Political, Economic and International relationships Priority themes:

- (1) Investigation of New Zealand labour force dynamics and workplace culture, in their national and international context, with specific attention to structural adjustment, employment generation, immigration, quality of working life and equity of employment opportunity.
- (2) Research into New Zealand trade and investment patterns, market problems and opportunities within the framework of a rapidly changing regional and global economy.

#### 28. Knowledge, Education and Training Priority theme:

Research on the process of skills formation in New Zealand (including analysis of barriers and opportunities to obtaining a high skilled workforce) in the context of continuing economic change.

These draft themes have been circulated for comment and discussion

# Recent Publications or Reports

## ***Rural Schools Reform: The Impact of Government Policies on Rural Schools and Communities in the Wellington Region***

*Geoff Skene*

The Social Policy Unit of the Wellington Regional Council recently completed this study of the impact of recent educational policy changes on rural schools and rural communities.

The methodology used in the study included questionnaires to school principals and Board of Trustees' chairpersons. These were primarily designed to elicit information on the impact of Tomorrow's Schools on rural communities. Questions covered topics such as the nature of community involvement in schools, principals' and chairpersons' perceptions of the effects of the new policies on their communities, workloads, advisory services, budgeting and finance, and school buses, as well as basic statistics on schools. In addition, interviews were held with educationalists and three communities were visited in different parts of the Wellington Region.

The analysis of education policy in the report does not make judgements of an educational nature (quality of teaching, educational outcomes, etc.), but concentrates on how community members are affected by changes in policy.

The report contains analysis of:

- \* The impact of Tomorrow's Schools on principals and boards of trustees;
- \* The impact on communities;
- \* Schools as businesses;
- \* The role of advisory services and the potential impact of cost recovery for these services;
- \* Staffing rural schools;
- \* Distance and transport problems; and
- \* School bus services.

Copies of the report are available from **Geoff Skene**, Social Policy Unit, Wellington regional Council, Box 11-646, Wellington; Ph. (04) 845-708, Fax (04) 856-960.

## ***Social Assessment - Theory, Process and Techniques***

*by C Nicholas Taylor, C Hobson Bryan & Colin Goodrich*

This is a major text describing social assessment theory and practice. It is developed from both international practice and training, and draws in particular on the New Zealand experience.

Its' intended audiences include students and practitioners who have interests and responsibilities in determining social implications of projects and public policy affecting natural resources and the environment.

The work is published in the Studies in Resource Management Series by the Centre for Resource Management, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand. An order form is enclosed with this newsletter.

## ***Public Attitudes to Genetic Engineering in New Zealand***

*by Paul K Couchman & Ken Fink-Jensen*  
(DSIR Crop Research Report No 138)

This report presents the results of a comprehensive survey of public attitudes to genetic engineering issues. The survey compares four groups, the general public of New Zealand, plus three specialist groups : farmers, scientists and teachers.

Respondents were asked about their interest in science and technology, awareness and perceptions of developments in science generally and genetic engineering specifically, and their attitudes to the use of genetically modified products and the patenting of life forms.

Copies are available from the Information manager, DSIR Crop Research, Private Bag, Christchurch.

## *At the Grassroots: Community Responses to Unemployment*

by **Kath Boswell and Denise Brown with Jo Maniapoto and Tamati Kruger, New Zealand Planning Council, July 1990**

The methodology and processes reported in this recent publication may well be of interest to social assessment practitioners.

The researchers have attempted to grapple with many of the issues raised at the recent Hanmer Social Assessment workshop, i.e., community consultation, consultation with Maori groups and iwi, practical ways of working in partnership with tangata whenua, 'bottom-up' approaches, recognition of other perspectives different from the dominant culture and the development of varied research methodologies.

The Community Responses to Unemployment Project originated from a request by the two Maori members of the Planning Council's Employment Working Group, who work at the community level. They were seeking a better balance between economic and social issues by gathering information that would put a human face on the unemployment statistics.

We sought to identify and describe a range of innovative responses to unemployment at the grassroots level. The aims of the project were to obtain and disseminate information to empower unemployed people and to assist decision makers to develop more pro-active policies to reduce unemployment.

The key features of our project methodology were:

- (1) We worked in partnership with the tangata whenua. The project was requested by Maori people who were actively working for the social and economic development of their people and communities.
- (2) It was community and grassroots based and acknowledged the expertise of community self help groups.
- (3) We drew upon alternative research methodologies from feminist research and participatory research as they have empowerment of the 'researched' as one of their goals and can provide a setting for two-way learning to take place.

- (4) We promoted the findings of the study following the hui (which were held as part of the project) and will continue to raise the policy implications with decision-makers.
- (5) We plan to return to the two study communities (Wanganui and the Eastern bay of Plenty) to monitor progress with the implementing of recommendations arising from the project.

Further information and an order form is enclosed with this newsletter.

*Kath Boswell*

## People News

**Paul Barker** has returned from a long stint with the OECD in Paris and is now working as a Policy Analyst in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Gerard Fitzgerald** and **Penelope Schoeffel** of the DSIR's Social Science Unit are currently working with an Indonesian anthropologist on **the social assessment of a proposed major geothermal development on Flores Island, in the Indonesia archipelago**. The proposed development is in an area currently lacking any centralised electricity generation facilities.

**Margy-Jean Malcom**, of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, has taken up a **Churchchill Fellowship in Canada**. Her partner, **Kevin Clark**, of the Appraisal and Evaluation Unit, Development Co-operation Division, Ministry of External Relations and Trade, has been **seconded to the Canadian International Development Agency**. They are expected back in November 1991.

**Nick Taylor** is making a steady recovery from his recent illness. He and Cilla are grateful for all of the support they have received.