



New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment (NZaia)  
Annual Conference: 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008, Nelson

## Assessing impacts in coastal and lake-front environments

Following successful meetings addressing the impacts of climate change (2005) energy developments (2006) and urban growth (2007) the New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment this year turns its attention to the impacts of human actions on coastal areas and lake-fronts.

The natural geography of New Zealand means that no part of the country is more than about 150 km from the coast, while most of our major settlements are on coastal lowlands. A mountainous interior and ample rainfall have given us a legacy of natural lakes, supplemented by artificial lakes, especially linked to major power developments. Coasts and lake-fronts have always been natural centres of human activity, and this is perhaps even more so in contemporary New Zealand. Yet clearly these are very sensitive and complex environments, with high levels of cultural and social significance for local people. Managing future development in these areas will require careful consideration of the likely effects of those developments on environmental systems and the social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of people and communities.

In this year's NZaia conference we bring together a variety of speakers (planners, policy makers, consultants, academics) to discuss case studies and practical approaches to assessing the impacts of growth on our coastal and lake-front environments, with particular emphasis on how we need to adapt our thinking and methods to achieve economic growth that safeguards these sensitive areas.

Important issues include: the pressure to develop coastal and lakefront land for residential purposes, expanding and changing the character of existing settlements or developing greenfield sites along the coastline in response to sea change; the continuing expansion of marine farms; marine conservation; the effects of terrestrial activities on coastal waters, particularly water quality; expansion of recreation and tourism activities, and urban amenities, along coasts and lake-fronts. The focus will be on how we assess impacts of all types, from ecological and physical, to social, cultural, and health, in a way that recognises the integrated nature of human and natural systems. The scope of the conference includes policies and plans, as well as projects, which introduces themes such as strategic environmental assessment and cumulative effects assessment, and national, regional and local government perspectives.

The conference will be of interest to anyone involved in decisions about resource development in the coastal and lake-front environments, at the local and regional level (including policy planners and consents officers in local and regional councils), iwi, environmental and public health staff, environmental consultants, academics, and local community groups.

### ***Conference venue:***

Tahuna Beach Conference Centre, Nelson. Conference details and information on accommodation options in the local area will be posted on the NZaia web site: [www.nzaia.org.nz](http://www.nzaia.org.nz)

### ***Further information:***

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