

## Chair's Report 2023

Strictly speaking, I should start by noting this is the Acting Chair's report, having formally stood down as Chair at the end of 2022. This year I've been keeping to 'chair' warm for the next person to take on the role.

The 2022 NZAIA conference, "*Wellbeing, Sustainability, and Impact Assessment: toward integrated policy-making*" was held this time last year at Te Papa. The presentations are on the NZAIA website and well worth perusing, even for those who were there. Following a typically thoughtful keynote from Prof Bronwyn Hayward, we went into a session that featured two speakers from the Treasury: Tim Ng and Phil Evans. With Caroline Saunders also in the session, it was a strong opening to the conference. It continued in that vein as we moved from integrating the three themes in policy making, to the impacts of policy itself on wellbeing, working with communities, and examining practical examples of integrating policy making and impact assessment. Although we were keen to stay with a largely in-person conference, the SIA conference in 2021 saw us using Zoom to bring several overseas presenters into the programme. It worked well so for 2022 we had presentations from Jack Krohn in Australia, and Di Lewis, beaming in from Canada. These really add an extra dimension to the meetings. We also retained the 2021 innovation of running two workshops on day two: Kerry Griffiths ran a workshop on the Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Scheme, while Nick Taylor and Richard Morgan presented one on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to improve policy and plan-making. As ever, we are very grateful to all our speakers, each of whom accepted invitations to speak and together produced a very compelling and successful event. Thanks to Andrew Crosland and Terry Calmeyer for managing logistics in Wellington, and to Nick Taylor and Dy Jolly for helping with programme development. And many thanks to Terry's partner Norm for the terrific conference logo!

This year we did not run our own conference, to avoid competing with our partner organisation EIANZ. Instead we worked with the Special Interest Section - Impact Assessment (SIS-IA) and SPREP on an IA session within the EIANZ conference, held in Auckland in October. We were all keen to see Pacific involvement in that session, but logistic issues prevented it so a Pacific Day was organised instead, hosted at the Stantec offices in Auckland, as a pre-conference event. Among the 30 attendees in the room were nine Pacific participants, funded by the World Bank, plus four SPREP staff, including the Deputy Director General Easter Chu Shing; in addition another 30-35 people joined online for the main presentations. SPREP were also very visible in the EIANZ conference itself, making for a really worthwhile collaborative effort. NZAIA provided scholarships to support three postgraduate students to attend the conference and help run the IA session. Their reflections on the conference are on the NZAIA website.

This year has seen one of *Impact Connector* released: Economic Methods and Impact Assessment, edited by Sophal Chhun and Richard Morgan. Three issues are in preparation: one looking at Deep sea mining; a second based on papers presented at the EIANZ SIS-IA symposium earlier this year; and the third based on presentations at the recent Pacific Day. We are planning for these to come out in the first half of 2024. Other themes are already being discussed, but we are always happy to hear from members, and the wider reading audience, about topics that would be of particular interest and value. Guest editors are also welcome: send an email to [admin@nzaia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzaia.org.nz) if you are interested.

Turning to submissions, NZAIA made one in February this year on the Natural and Built Environment Bill, possibly helping to shape the s32-type evaluation process contained in the Act itself: one can but

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hope these efforts are sometimes worthwhile! Of course both the NBA and SPA are due to be repealed within coming weeks. Let's hope some of the value of all that work is retained in eventual replacement legislation (especially spatial planning, ideally twinned with SEA). Two other submissions were made later in the year, both to the Environment Committee: one on Sea-bed Mining in New Zealand, the other on Climate Adaptation. All three submissions are on our website (More>Community>Policy submissions). We are keen to enlist the assistance of our members in helping to develop submissions so keep an eye on our website and the eNews for invitations to get involved in specific submission processes. Also, if you think NZAIA should be making its voice heard about something involving impact assessment in some way, please let us know: email [admin@nzaia.org.nz](mailto:admin@nzaia.org.nz).

The strategic planning process, begun in Dec 2020, has been running through the year, although core group changes have slowed work in some areas. The Governance working group has focused on developing a new Constitution to meet the requirements of the new Incorporated Societies Act, passed in April 2022. This will require NZAIA to re-register under the Act by April 2026, hence the need for the new Constitution. This year the core group held two lunch meetings by Zoom, and a third email-based discussion, to go through the first draft of the new Constitution. This will be revised and we hope to have a version to put out to members for discussion early in 2024. The Policy working group continued their great work reviewing our policies and procedures; current work includes financial policy and procedures, and our ethics policy. The Internal and External Relationships groups were amalgamated and are looking to prioritise actions for the coming year. In the meantime we have tried to address relationship issues in our operations this year: for example, liaising with the NZPI on the Climate Change submission mentioned earlier, and of course working with EIANZ-SIS and SPREP on the Pacific Day event and the IA session at the EIANZ conference this last October. It is worth mentioning that our three MoUs – with EIANZ, SPREP, and IAIA – have all been revised and signed off within the last 12 months.

As (acting) Chair, I'm always grateful for the great support from the wider core group, but especially my fellow office holders, namely Gilly Stewart, who stepped into the Secretary role this year, and Andrew Crosland (Treasurer). Others who must be recognised for particular roles are Nick Taylor, our editor in chief for *Impact Connector*, and Terry Calmeyer our social media guru. But all of the core group have contributed in various ways, both at our monthly meetings, and virtually when asked to take on particular tasks. Thank you all.

Richard Morgan

Acting Chair, NZAIA  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2023