

Chair's Report to NZAIA AGM 2019



The NZAIA conference last year ran from 28-29 November, in Havelock North, and addressed the issue of regional development: with the Provincial Growth Fund pouring millions of dollars into the regions, we asked if the initiatives were being subject to some form of impact assessment, to head off unintended consequences. Our keynote speaker was Raewyn Peart, from the Environmental Defence Society, who spoke about their work on Resource Management Reform, identifying key challenges and potential options. As usual we had a full programme of invited speakers addressing strategic, biophysical and social/cultural aspects of regional development, in the context of the PGF programme. Copies of the presentations are on our website. Following a successful trial the previous year, we decided to make sponsorship of 2-3 graduate students to attend the NZAIA conference a regular undertaking. The 2018 conference saw two students sponsored and both subsequently joined the NZAIA core group. Particular thanks must go to Christine Cheyne for her significant contribution to organising the 2018 conference.

Two more *Impact Connector* newsletters were produced over the last 12 months, one on landscape assessment (edited by Clive Anstey and Chantal Whitby) and another one ecological impact assessment (edited by Judith Roper-Lindsay). Both newsletters featured several short articles authored by a number of practitioners and/or researchers with extensive experience in these fields of impact assessment. They were circulated to members, and uploaded onto our website. We have been approached by EBSCO, one of the major international providers of information services for academic and public libraries: they would like to include *Impact Connector* in their databases, which would increase the potential audience for the articles significantly. We are currently considering this possibility. We will have an issue on SIA shortly, and are planning an issue based on the 2019 conference theme.

NZAIA continued send out e-news updates to members every 4-6 weeks, containing short information items. At the start of 2019 Chantal Whitby passed this task to Kate McNab, who has built on and expanded the model developed by Chantal. Our thanks to both Chantal and Kate for the work they have put into this important form of communication with our members.

We made one submission this year, on the Zero Carbon Bill, and Richard Morgan spoke to that submission when the Select Committee hearing was held in Dunedin. There were other opportunities to make submissions, in line with NZAIA's interests in impact assessment, but we often lack the people, or the time, to organise a well thought out submission. It may be opportune to consider establishing a Submission Co-ordinator, to identify opportunities and put together small groups to generate material for particular submissions.

Six NZAIA core group members, and a number of other NZAIA members, attended the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) Annual Conference, held in Brisbane, May 2019. (NZAIA is the New Zealand affiliate of IAIA). Several core group members ran a panel session and workshop on impact assessment in New Zealand, and Nick Taylor represented NZAIA in working with the World Bank and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to organise a day-long event on impact assessment and the Pacific. In addition, several members presented papers and posters on aspects of IA in New Zealand.

Following the main IAIA conference, Richard Morgan attended an international workshop on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) organised by an SEA working group in EIANZ, with NZAIA support. This continues work on SEA in Australia and New Zealand involving members from both organisations, starting with the SEA conference we ran in Lincoln in 2016. The working group have been focusing increasingly on the upcoming review of the Australian Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999, which contains a formal SEA process for any policies, plans or programmes that may have implications for natural resources or biodiversity. We will continue to stay in touch with the working group and will be interested in any initiatives to develop SEA principles and practice guidelines.

The year has seen great strides made in the use of social media, and website development, as outlined in the Secretary's report. Many thanks to the team: Kate McNab, Katherine Russell, Dy Jolly and Rachel Teen, for driving these improvements. These changes are reflected in increasing membership, and stronger engagement with the enews and *Impact Connector*. We've also been upgrading our payment systems, with a move to online processing of credit card payments, and better invoicing processes. Thanks again to Kate for the initiatives and technical support, and Chantal for using the new systems very effectively.

It has been a busy but productive year, culminating in the 2019 conference which is one of the largest we have held in recent years. All of this is based on volunteer effort, almost all from members of the core group. I'm very grateful to all of them for the work they have put in this year, and especially to my two officer colleagues, Rachel and Chantal, for carrying out their official duties so professionally. Chantal is stepping down as Treasurer, but staying involved in the core group. On behalf of NZAIA I'd like to thank her for the huge amount of work she has put in as Treasurer over the last 2 years.

Richard Morgan

Chair, NZAIA

20th November 2019