



New Challenges: the Future of Impact Assessment

22 - 23 October 2024

Chateau on the Park - Christchurch

www.nzaia.org.nz

Impact Assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand is under pressure.

Economic stresses, Covid, natural hazards and disaster recovery add to concerns over losses of biodiversity, decline in environmental quality, and increased social tensions. Further pressure is coming from the growing urgency to respond to the Climate Emergency, and there are demands to modify or even remove impact assessment in decision making.

The most obvious demand is to **speed up** decision making, for resource uses, infrastructure, and new housing. Revisions of environmental and spatial planning will need to include processes for climate change adaptation, freshwater management and marine resource development, while embracing concepts such as just transitions, nature positive change, and community-based approaches to development. Change processes must engage and mobilise groups with different economic, social, cultural, and environmental values, when misinformation and distrust of experts too easily cloud necessary debates.

Impact assessment plays a critical role in supporting decision-making, by investigating and shaping the impacts of proposed actions before and after a decision is made. As decision-making comes under pressure to speed up, deal with new issues, and embrace all perspectives:

- *How do we ensure the integrity and quality of assessments (ecological, cultural, social, economic)?*
- *How can we strengthen the influence of impact assessment at all stages of the project cycle, from design to implementation?*
- *What opportunities will challenge impact assessments?*
- *What can we learn from international trends and thinking?*

The two-day conference will combine invited speakers, panels and submitted poster papers. Speakers will explore challenges for impact assessment with practical examples, case studies and updated methods, and offer their perspectives on the future of impact assessment in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment (NZAIA) leads impact assessment practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. We invite the diverse impact assessment community and people in central, regional and local government, iwi, hapū, universities and science organisations, consultancies, the private sector and NGOs to attend. Graduate students are particularly welcome.