



Assessing social impacts for improved decision making



21-22 April 2021

Tait Technology Centre, CHRISTCHURCH

Decisions in coming years will have implications for individuals, families and communities, both intended and unintended. We will decide measures to mitigate climate change, devise plans to shape urban growth, improve water resource management, and every year process many resource consents. The adverse social impacts from policies, plans or projects can often undermine their intended outcomes and erode public support. On the other hand, positive social outcomes can help balance other environmental and economic costs.

The assessment of social impacts must always be part of environmental and social decision-making. Under the Resource Management Act there is a clear mandate for such assessments. In other contexts the mandate may be less clear or absent, yet decision-makers will recognise the need for social impact information as part of their deliberations. Sometimes the need to address potential social impacts is unclear, or proponents of change do not understand how to instigate appropriate studies or use their findings.

The NZAIA 2021 conference will focus on the assessment of social impacts as part of the wider process of weighing the impacts of decisions on natural and human environments. In particular, we aim to:

- **demonstrate the benefits of assessing the social impacts of proposals;**
- **showcase examples of effective social impact assessment;**
- **examine how impact management is improved by a good understanding of social impacts;**
- **consider how the assessment of social impacts can be integrated with other forms of impact assessment at all levels of decision-making;**
- **identify areas of decision-making where the assessment of social impacts is urgently needed.**

NZAIA invites the diverse impact assessment community and interested people in central, regional and local government, iwi, universities, consultancies, the private sector and NGOs to attend. Graduate students are particularly welcome.

The two day conference will combine invited speakers, submitted presentations and poster papers. On the second afternoon, one session will feature two invited case studies in a workshop format to develop skills and advance methods in the assessment of social impacts.