

NZAIA Policy and procedures for organising conferences (FINAL DRAFT)

This document sets out the objectives, policy and procedures for organising NZAIA conferences.

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Abbreviations

AGM	Annual general meeting
CG	Core group
COG	Conference organising group
EIANZ	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
NZAIA	New Zealand association for impact assessment
PT	Project team
Q&A	Questions and Answers
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

1 Objectives of an NZAIA conference

NZAIA conferences should reinforce the objects of NZAIA as they are an important part of the organisation's mission, which includes:

- To promote the practice of impact assessment (including social and environmental assessment) in the formulation and implementation of developments and policy proposals.
- To promote research and consultation practices which identify the full social and environmental effects of policies & projects and the measures required to address these.
- To promote the development of impact assessment theory and methods.
- To promote impact assessment that recognises and accommodates different social and cultural values, including those of indigenous peoples.
- To promote and encourage a high standard of practice amongst members of the Association and others using impact assessment methods, in accordance with the Code of Ethics.
- To recognise and consider the Treaty of Waitangi.
- To undertake or encourage initiatives, consistent with the other objects, powers and resources of the Association, to promote or advance the protection of the environment.

The Core Group (CG) can add to, adapt or emphasise the objectives for any conference.

2 Timing

NZAIA conferences are usually held annually, near the end of the calendar year, but the Core Group may decide to hold a conference on a different time schedule. Such decisions should be taken by the whole CG.

Usually the decision to hold an annual or other conference is taken following discussion at the AGM in the year preceding the conference year. This discussion can include suggestions on the conference theme and host city but CG retain full authority to decide on timing, venue, site and theme of a conference.

CG can decide to hold a conference jointly with another organisation but should ensure NZAIA is fully recognised as a partner organisation.

Usually NZAIA annual conferences take place over two days. A shorter or longer conference is a decision of the CG.

In planning the timing of a conference the CG will take into account the timing of any related conferences and in particular any conference or event of partner organisations: EIANZ, IAIA and SPREP.

3 Organising framework and key roles

Conference organisation involves a number of roles. These are set out in the table below, while noting that CG may adapt these roles if necessary for any conference, for instance a conference organised jointly with another organisation.

Conference organising roles	Key tasks
Core Group (CG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops/Agrees conference theme, city, venue and dates • Develops/agrees overall budget for conference and registration fees • Receives updates on programme and agrees key note speaker(s) • Receives updates on logistics • Makes decisions outside agreed budget • Addresses any major issues that arise • Organises, promotes and decides on student scholarships • Appoints a conference organising group and group leader (coordinator)
Conference Organising Group (COG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the conference and makes the day to day decisions (within budget and scope) • Investigates and recommends a venue • Oversees the theme and programme development and makes decisions on programme speakers and content • Develops and agrees on promotional material • Oversees logistics, venue relations, catering etc. • Appoints the conference manager (optional) • Assists the Programme team
Programme team – usually a subgroup of COG and can include people not on the COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts programme including sessions • Identifies, invites and confirms speakers • Works with speakers on titles and abstracts • Once speakers are confirmed and material obtained notifies the logistics team • Draws up a draft programme • Provides content related promotional and programme material and social media
Logistics team - usually a sub group of COG Includes (as needed) the Secretary, the Treasurer and the social media / website leaders. Ideally has a local person/s and can include people not on the COG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals with logistics e.g. venue, audio-visual, catering • Leads promotion and maintains spreadsheet • Sets up conference web pages • Sets up, organises and records registrations • Requests speaker photos and bios, confirms title and abstract received, asks speakers to register, provides any other speaker logistics • Sets up on the day logistics, run sheet, registration, rapporteurs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigns tasks for student helpers and briefs them
Conference leader/manager Can be a paid role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits on all committees including Core Group • Reports to COG • Ensures conference planning and implementation remains on time and budget • Manages the conference email address, promotions, and registration process

4 Conference to do list

Organising the conference involves a number of tasks. A generic list follows. This list can be adapted for each conference by the COG and aligned with the above roles. Note an indicative timeline is provided in the next section of these procedures. Development of the programme is discussed below in a separate section.

Venue, dates and budget

- Choose possible date options
- Obtain venue options (by availability)
- Obtain venue prices (includes catering and audio-visual) and organise these using the budget model (see organising spreadsheets)
- Decide on dates
- Decide on venue
- Decide on contact person/organiser for venue and catering
- Circulate “hold this date” to members
- Decide on registration fee as per budget with chosen venue
- Monitor and update budget and provide budget reports to CG
- Maintain conference organising spreadsheet (including tracking budget)

Programme development

- Canvass CG for ideas on conference theme and decide theme
- Decide on programme shape and format using the conference shell
- Write conference blurb
- Identify, invite and confirm speakers
- Promote poster session
- Work with speakers on crafting titles and abstracts
- Request (nag) speakers to provide photos, bios and abstracts
- Prepare detailed programme
- Put programme, + speaker bios/photos/abstracts on the website
- Collate conference programme in PDF format

Promotion

- Organise/create the conference image for promotion
- Create one-page conference flyer for promotion
- Upload content to the website
- Seek sponsorships and liaise with them if successful

- Monitor and respond to any enquiries sent to the email address
- Send promotion emails to our large e-list
- Send promotion emails to universities, consultants, local & central govt departments
- Do social media posts

Computer Logistics

- Designate someone to oversee computer and audio-visual arrangements
- Have a laptop and pen drives available at the venue
- Create slides for sessions with links to speaker presentations
- Load presentations onto pen drive, laptop or server depending on the venue setup
- Back up all presentations at the end of each day
- Have a remote control available
- Check microphones
- Check in advance and on the day that Zoom works for the conference and/or AGM
- Test all systems at the venue the day before (if possible) or early the first morning
- Know the guest wifi link and provide it at the venue

Registration

- Set up, organise and record registrations - including sending invoices
- Update registration form and put it on line
- A suitable table for registration
- People to staff the table from well before the timetabled start
- Name badges – print and bring name tags and lanyards
- Pens and pads for those who request them
- NZAIA Banners
- Small number of printed copies of the short timetable
- Directional signs for entrance and foyer
- Programme Summary – 1 copy (A3, Colour)
- Participant list
- Dinner list
- Print programme and other materials, name-tags etc
- Co-ordinate with people who are displaying posters

Items for sessions

- Flipchart paper
- Post stick paper
- Velcro hook stickers, blue tack and tape for poster boards, etc
- Timing signs (1 min, 2 min, stop)
- Daily run sheet and layout
- Chair people organised
- Instructions to chairs (see list)

AGM (when it takes place at the conference)

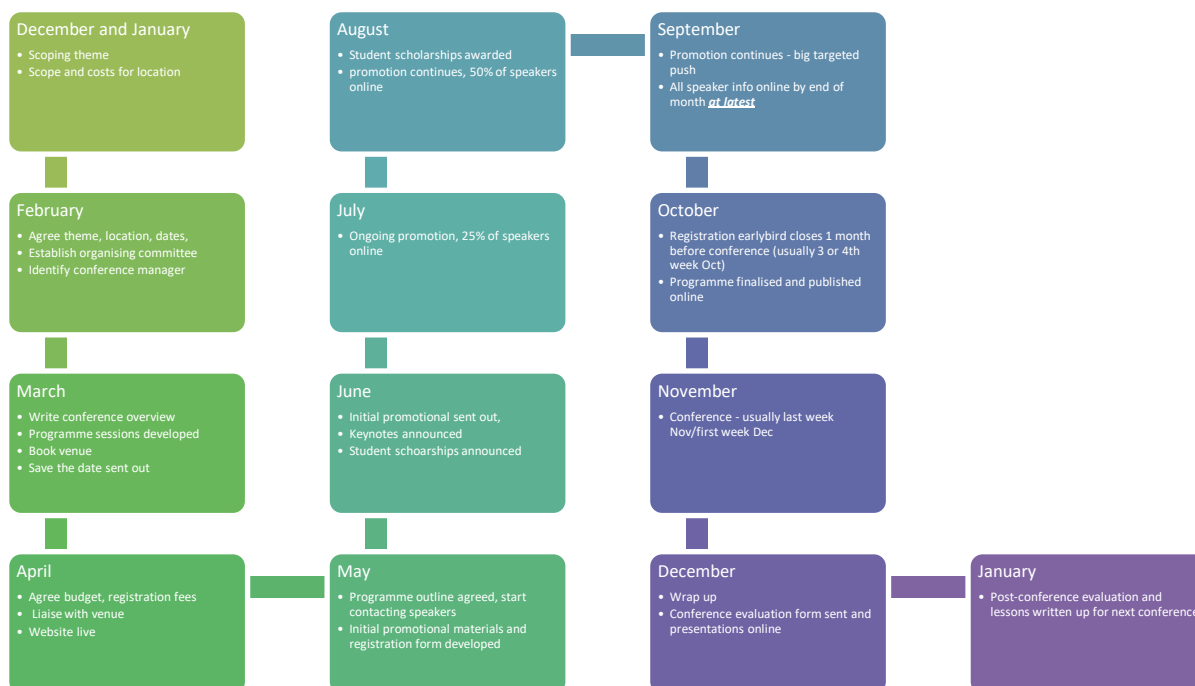
- Put key documents on website
- Make copies of any hand outs, remits and reports
- Organise AGM drinks and nibbles

Post-conference

- Prepare evaluation form for survey monkey
- Email out evaluation form link to attendees
- Upload presentations to website
- Get poster files and upload to website
- Pay invoices for catering, venue and poster boards
- Chase any late payments
- Remind students to send their receipts in for reimbursement.

5 Timeline

An indicative timeline for organising the conference is provided in the following diagram. The timeline assumes a conference around the end of November and should be modified for any other dates.



6 Conference format and programme

The COG will develop the conference programme, usually delegating the task to a Programme Team (PT). This team are usually members of COG but may include additional people, especially for a specialised topic.

The conference brings together invited speakers, submitted presentations and submitted poster papers, covering current issues for IA practice and topical case studies. Presentations are usually 15 mins with 5 mins for questions and then a 30 min period for discussion in each session of three speakers. Slides, abstracts and a short paper (optional) are published on our website in the on-line proceedings.

The PT or a member of COG usually approach a speaker, explain the theme and intended session and ask them to take part. If they agree and the speaker is programmed they are asked to provide an abstract, bio and picture for promotional purposes. At the discretion of the COG an invited speaker may be offered any of: a free registration for the conference, a free dinner, assistance with travel expenses with the resulting costs included in the conference budget.

The Indaba session is an open space session with topics for discussion canvassed during the conference and groups formed at the opening of the Indaba session. People are encouraged to move between sessions if they wish and sessions last only as long as the group wishes. Each group should select a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to keep discussion on track and make sure everyone has a say – not to make a lengthy presentation themselves. All key points in a group are recorded for the proceedings and any actions suggested for NZAIA are passed to Core Group.

Poster papers are an excellent opportunity to present and discuss IA theory, methods and practice in a supportive atmosphere. Students in particular are encouraged to participate in the conference in this way. Poster presentations are usually called for on any aspect of impact assessment including the conference topic. Poster presenters are asked to submit an abstract for their poster and the PT will confirm it is on the programme. One presenter for each poster must register for the conference. Posters are on display throughout the conference and must be hung on the first morning and taken down at the end of the conference. Presenters are asked to stand by their poster during the poster sessions and be prepared to provide comments on the key points of the poster.

An option for the PT is to invite case studies of impact assessment practice in a workshop format on the second afternoon to develop skills and advance methods in the field.

In developing the programme the PT may make a call to submit presented papers. The PT does not have to accept any presentation offered. Papers are accepted only if they fit the conference theme and programme development. No funding is available to assist submitted paper presenters. Places for papers accepted in the programme are only confirmed once the presenter is registered for the conference.

Conference formats typically have one keynote session per day, a total of six sessions that each has a theme with three speakers and a discussion with the audience, and then indaba/open space on the last afternoon. The programme is quite flexible though - eg, changing keynotes to accommodate their availability is not a problem, we have had 2 speakers in a session, three keynotes etc.

7 Guidelines for session chairs

The Programme team should identify a chair for each conference session. The session chair has a key task ensuring that the speakers keep to time and topic and that the period set aside for discussion works effectively. The following points should give session chairs more confidence in carrying out this task, and provide consistency between sessions:

- Before the session starts, identify and talk to the presenters. Emphasise the timing of 15 mins talk, 5 mins immediate Q&A, then 30 mins open discussion following the presentations. Make sure the presentations are loaded (assuming they are using PowerPoint: almost all will).
- Familiarise yourself with the title slide for your session: it has hyperlinks to the presentations; this will enable you to open the presentation on behalf of the speaker.
- Remember to introduce yourself, very briefly – this is not an opportunity to make a speech...!
- Before the first speaker, remind people of the format and there will be Q and As and then a discussion session. Warn you will save long points and questions for the discussion period.
- Introduce speakers briefly by name, affiliation and area of expertise. All speakers will have provided a short bio that is in the programme. No long (or even short) introductions are necessary.
- Timing - have someone in front of the speaker who can flourish timing signs, to alert the speaker that they have 5,2,0 mins left...that takes them to the 15 min mark. The timing signs will be colour coded: 5 mins is on green paper, 2 mins on yellow, and 0 on pink. Warn speakers to keep to time. If they keep talking, you must interrupt them if they get close to 20 mins, so the next speaker (or the discussion) can get underway on time. You may want to use a timer on your phone to keep track on time yourself.
- Discussion: do not allow prolonged Q&A between speakers and the audience. Ideally topics will be raised that will allow members of the audience to make comments, contribute experiences, etc. But to start the discussion, there may be specific Qs for particular speakers, and if some seem to be popular questions, then put that question to the speaker then move to open up discussion
- Note there are usually mobile microphones available for use by the audience. Try to get people to identify themselves when they do speak... students can assist in moving microphones around.
- Remember the conference is focusing on the impacts of the mitigation and adaptation measures...so if discussion starts to get bogged down in debate about the impacts of climate change, or some other tangential topic, try to bring it back to the conference theme. Other members of the core group should be alerted to this and help shift topics if needed.
- Try to finish the session on time. People hate sessions over-running and the breaks are designed to promote informal discussions, including of the posters and any displays.

8 Registration fees and refunds

The registration fee for the conference is established by the COG and confirmed by the CG. The COG should use the budget spreadsheet model to help recommend the fees proposal.

The NZAIA conference aims to attract a wide range of participants and therefore looks to set a registration fee that is modest and affordable. Recent fees are shown in the table below.

The conference fee is also set to maintain the current financial status of the organisation wherever possible therefore cost restraint is assumed in selecting venues and operating costs such as catering.

	2020	2021	2022
Non-members 2 days	380	380	410
Members 2 days	300	300	330
Student/community 1 or 2 days	100	100	110
Non-members 1 day	210	210	240
Members 1 day	160	160	190

Full refunds are given to people who need to withdraw their registration up to a date that is determined by COG with part refunds thereafter, with timing of all refunds based on contracts with the venue, public health status and any other factors agreed by COG in advance.

The COG can offer free registrations to speakers or for reciprocal arrangements with another organisation.

9 Student scholarships

The Association offers scholarships to support postgraduate student attendance at the annual conference consistent with our charitable purpose and support for students and early professionals..

Up to five scholarships are offered in any year dependent on the available budget. Core Group decide on the number of scholarships depending on the conference budget model for that year. The CG may decide to supplement the budget for scholarships from financial reserves. Also, the COG may apply conference sponsorship specifically to scholarships and name the sponsor accordingly. See sponsorship section of these policies and procedures.

Applicants for scholarships should be students in a New Zealand tertiary education institution with an interest in any form of impact assessment (IA) (e.g. current or recent course in IA; current or recent IA research, etc.).

The COG will establish a panel to develop criteria, assess and rank the applicants. The panel should include the Chair of NZAIA and at least one person currently or recently teaching impact assessment or relevant courses at tertiary level.

The successful applicants will receive a free conference registration (student rate), including the conference dinner. NZAIA will reimburse reasonable travel and accommodation expenses for out of town students (on production of receipts) up to a value of \$500. Each recipient also gets a free one-

year student membership of NZAIA for the subsequent year. The CG may vary the amount of an individual scholarship in any year.

Successful applicants will be asked to assist with technical support, rapporteur and other duties over the two days of the conference, and will be expected to attend the whole conference and the NZAIA AGM if it takes place at the conference. They will also contribute a short item for the monthly NZAIA e-newsletter reflecting on aspects of the conference they found particularly interesting and useful.

10 Sponsorship

The COG may solicit sponsorship for the conference. Sponsorship can be for specific purposes such as attendance of students or the conference dinner and for conference costs in general. The amount of a sponsorship is set by the COG and confirmed by the CG. Flexibility is important when working with potential sponsors. Benefits of sponsorship can include any or all of the following:

- Logo recognition as a Sponsor in all conference promotional material, including the conference program and web site (including a link for up to a year).
- Ongoing recognition as a Sponsor before and during the conference, including verbal acknowledgement as Sponsor during the conference opening and closing.
- Logo recognition as Sponsor at the introduction of each conference session (logo displayed on session opening slide).
- Sponsor's own signage prominently displayed in the main conference venue (e.g. pull up banner).
- Option to have an exhibition table (free) or promotional poster display.
- Conference pack insert (to be supplied by sponsor).
- One registration to the conference including catering and Conference Dinner.

COG will assess all sponsorship proposals for consistency with the above NZAIA conference objectives (see section 1) and reserve the right to refuse any proposed sponsor.

11 Greening the conference

Consistent with its overall objectives in support of sustainable futures, NZAIA places considerable emphasis on holding a green conference. COG should consider the following:

- Travel
 - Have a venue easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling
 - Ensure bike parking is available
 - Choose a venue with AV facilities so an international speaker/s can join
- Catering
 - Utilise non-disposable table ware rather than disposable items
 - Provide organic, fair trade coffee and fair trade tea whenever possible
 - Use locally or regionally sourced and sustainably raised food for meals, to the extent possible
 - Use stainless steel milk dispensers for coffee/tea instead of individual packets of milk
- Waste
 - Reduce the use of disposable plates, cups and cutlery
 - Avoid individually wrapped food items
 - Provide water stations instead of plastic bottled-water and encourage delegates to bring their own bottles

- Use crockery or recyclable or biodegradable beverage cups and bottles; avoid Styrofoam or plastic
- Ask delegates to confirm their attendance at events and functions in advance to reduce waste and leftovers
- Venue
 - Use venues that provide recycling and compost facilities
 - Use hotels that have green programs – e.g. linen and towel reuse
 - Have a conference venue where showering and changing facilities are available so as to encourage active transport
- Energy
 - Minimise light usage and insist on energy efficient lighting
 - Avoid overuse of heating or A/C – ask people to dress appropriately
 - Turn off all appliances and lights over night
- Carbon offsetting
 - Highlight that most airlines have carbon off-set programs
 - Encourage team building exercises that give back to the community – e.g. tree planting, habitat for humanity
- Printed materials
 - Limit printed materials; communicate via e-mail and web to the extent practical
 - Use electronic communication to publicize the event and updates for the majority of communications/registration
 - Provide the final program on line and suitable for download to phones
 - Limit handouts available for those who wish to pick them up.