

# The performance of EIA under the RMA

Policies, plans and projects

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# Overview

- EIA and the development of EIA in NZ
- RMA guiding principles
- Hierarchy of assessment, s32 and AEEs
  - Role of technical assessment
- IA practitioners and certification
- What does the future hold and what can be done better?

# What is impact assessment?

*"Impact assessment for us means the process of examining the potential implications of proposed actions (be they project, plan or policy actions) for the natural environment, for people, their health and wellbeing, and their social, cultural and economic activities and values -- with particular emphasis on the unanticipated impacts. That analysis is then used to modify proposals, to inform final decisions about proposals, and to inform impact management plans."*

# The development of EIA in NZ

- Increasing importance of environmental issues in the late 1960s and 1970s
- Commission for the Environment 1972
- *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Procedures 1974*
- Revision to the procedures 1987
- RMA development

# RMA guiding principles

- Resource Management Law Reform process – three principles:
  - Consequences of proposals (policies, rules and projects)
  - Shared responsibility
  - Integrated into the statutory planning processes

# EIA hierarchy under the RMA

- National policy and regional policy statements:
  - Section 32
- Regional, coastal and district plans
  - Section 32
- Consent applications
  - AEEs and section 104

# Some observations about s 32 assessments

- Evolution of the process
- Role of technical evidence fundamental
- 2014 changes
  - ‘Particular regard’ at notification
  - Economics and employment

# Impact assessment of projects

- Effects and environment definitions very wide
- Includes potential and cumulative effects
- Changing perception of the role of AEEs?
- Similarly to section 32, a strong role for technical evidence



# IA practitioners and certification

- Impact assessment a specialty in itself?
- Specialty depends on individual qualifications
- Limited role for certification?

# What does the future hold? What can we do better?

- Changes to legislative framework?
- Professional standards and ethics
- Timing of involvement critical
- How to be cost effective?
- Young practitioners and growing the pool of experts