

NZ Association for Impact Assessment Conference - Assessing impacts in coastal and lake front environments, Nelson 27th -28th November 2008

Recently I had the pleasure to attend and privilege to present at the NZAIA meeting in Nelson. This group is involved in promoting tools for all impact assessment practitioners. Here are a few of my thoughts for your information...

Professor Nick Harvey opened the conference by sharing his experience in strategic planning for resource use. Discussions and debate focused around the current issues and challenges for practitioners. The presentations were free and frank and several included case studies on where certain tools worked and their limitations (e.g. marina developments, offshore wind farms and aquaculture). It was a useful chance to reflect on major projects and to consider what worked and what didn't. The group thought that time to reflect on cases could help improve future decision making. We also had the added benefit of presentations on cultural impact assessment and health assessments. This wider exposure to other impact assessment tools was refreshing and to use Prof. Richard Morgan's summary "reconnected sectors of the environment" (social, cultural, health, ecology and physical). The presentation on non-statutory tools (coastal strategies) gave an example of a non-RMA method of identifying future needs of a region and then implementation through statutory documents (LTCCP, structure plans etc). I enjoyed the presentation from the President of the recreational fisheries council who highlighted the value of anecdotal evidence, costs of participation and challenged future policy makers to design systems that are fair to all resource users and that include "a pinch of common sense". I like that. The open discussion (*Indaba*) included debate on the following key issues raised in the conference:

- Strategic Impact Assessment and Strategic Planning (*the two seem to get mixed, and the lack of both*)
- Cumulative impacts (*still not used effectively – how can we develop better tools?*)
- Adaptive management (*when is it appropriate and can we improve how it works?*)
- Natural Character/Visual Amenity/Recreation (*links between recreational experiences and impacts on natural character*)
- Impacts of Remedial Works

I trust that you found this a useful summary! For more information about NZAIA have a look at the website.

<http://www.nzaia.org.nz/>

Cheers Stacey

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of LUPR is planned for July 2009. Articles for publication should be submitted by May 15, 2009 to Hamish Rennie, lupr@lincoln.ac.nz (Please put 'LUPR' in the subject line)

In issue 2 we hope to include an 'agony aunt/uncle' section - an opportunity to ask an expert your planning related question.