Griffith University in Australia in August 2009. Fortuitously, the Australian planning schools are reviewing their equivalent accreditation procedures at the same conference. It is expected that this will enable useful comparisons of content and delivery.

NZPI MEMBERSHIP A general reminder to folk to keep up their NZPI membership! Recent issues of Planning Quarterly have focused on Coastal Planning and Transport Planning. The upcoming issue will focus on the RMA reforms and the following issue will feature structure planning.

**LIVING LAKE SYMPOSIUM 2, 4 – 5TH NOVEMBER 2009**

A follow up to Living Lake Symposium 2007, Living Lake Symposium 2 will focus on the planning issues around the management of Te Waihora/ Lake Ellesmere. Updates will cover the current state of the lake and its values, along with potential future plans and management activities since 2007.

For further information go to the Waihora Ellesmere Trust website [www.wet.org.nz](http://www.wet.org.nz) or contact the trust at admin@wet.org.nz, Phone: (+ 64) 03 353 9712, Cell phone: (+ 64) 027 294 2132, PO Box 198, Tai Tapu 7645, New Zealand.

**PLANNING PAINS? DON’T PANIC!**

This a new section for LUPR - an opportunity to ask all those burning questions about planning issues. To get started we have a question about LU qualifications but we are keen to include a range of topical and tricky planning queries in future issues. Please contact LUPR if you have a question you would like answered in the next issue.

**Question** – Why do some Master of Environmental Planning (MEP) graduates from Lincoln University get honours and others get distinction or merit – what’s the difference?

**Response** – An Honours degree generally indicates that the degree has included a significant individual, independent research component (hence the difference between a Bachelors degree with Honours and a Post Graduate Diploma). Under current regulations, at Lincoln University those students eligible to graduate with an MEP (Hons) are those who have replaced two of their courses with a dissertation. Those students who do not do a dissertation are eligible for being awarded Distinction or Merit.

The grading system for a Masters is the same as the Bachelors degree. 80% (A-) or more is ‘1st class Honours’ or Distinction, 70-79% (B+, B) is ‘2nd class Honours, Division I’ or Merit, 60-69% (B-, C+) is ‘2nd class Honours, Division II’. The award of an MEP with Honours or Merit/Distinction is automatic and only available to those students who have achieved that average. A candidate can only get Honours or Distinction/Merit if they complete within 3 years of first enrolment date for full time students and four years for part-time students. Some Universities and degrees have a 3rd Class Honours category, but the MEP does not. Under older Lincoln University regulations the difference between Honours and Distinction/Merit was not as clearly specified as it is now.

It is important to note that if a student is seriously impaired for an examination and applies for an aegrotat they may not be awarded honours. Instead of applying for an aegrotat, they may elect to sit a subsequent examination (see general regulation 3 of the Master Degree regulations). Those students intending to do a PhD are recommended to do an honours programme as the preliminary qualification for admission to a PhD at a New Zealand university is a Bachelors or Masters degree with first or second class honours. This means that you have completed a research degree as opposed to a taught degree. Without honours you would need to apply for special admission and produce relevant information to progress to further assessment of your application.

(From 2009 Lincoln University has changed its grading scale to be more in line with the scale used at other NZ universities. The percentages noted above apply from semester 1 2009. Marks awarded before 2009 were on the old grading scheme.)