

Choice Modelling Experts

Workshop

Geoff Kerr*

In November, Lincoln University, under the direction of Associate Professor Geoff Kerr, hosted the fourth Australasian Choice Modelling Experts Workshop at the Heritage Hotel in Christchurch. Choice modelling is a technique used by environmental economists to measure the values, often in money terms, of environmental and landscape attributes. The technique is also extremely useful for predicting behavioural changes, having particularly important applications in transport modelling.

While non-market valuation has not been widely employed in New Zealand environmental decision making, the recent Environment Court decision on Project Hayes clearly signalled the Court's desire for application of these types of methods.

[624] Given that [the witness] had identified that there are recognised non-market valuation methods of placing a value on these [largely landscape] environmental impacts, it is disappointing that Meridian's principal expert failed to utilise them. Accepting that neither [of the witnesses] may have particular expertise in such methods, Meridian could have engaged someone with appropriate expertise to provide what estimates they could using such methods. (Decision No. C 103/2009 Maniototo Environmental Society Incorporated & others (Appellants) vs Central Otago District Council and Otago Regional Council (Respondents) and Meridian Energy (Applicant & Appellant)).

The workshop was capped at 40 attendees, a limit that was easily reached. This far surpassed attendance at previous workshops, signalling increased interest in this type of analysis. Part of the broader appeal was attendance of 14 PhD students at the workshop, facilitating transfer of knowledge to and amongst future practitioners and experts. Expansion from environmental interests to transport, food, and health domains was also pleasing, providing an opportunity for cross-disciplinary fertilisation. Half of the participants travelled from Australia. Keynote addresses were provided by Professor David Hensher, Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies, University of Sydney and Professor Jordan Louviere, Centre for the Study of Choice, University of Technology Sydney.

For further information on choice modelling or the workshop contact Geoff Kerr Geoffrey.Kerr@lincoln.ac.nz

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