

**Chair’s Report to NZAIA AGM 2017**

This year we are holding the AGM during the EIANZ conference at Te Papa, a month earlier than usual, but reflecting our effort to develop stronger links with EIANZ with which we have an MoU. In particular we are developing a good working relationship with the impact assessment practitioners who comprise the Special Interest Section on IA, and at this conference we are collaborating with them in a roundtable on strategic environmental assessment. SEA has been a topic of interest to both groups over the past year, and looks set to be a key theme at least through to the Brisbane IAIA conference in 2019.

SEA was the theme of the NZAIA 2016 conference at Lincoln University in December last year. We were very pleased to have Jenny Pope, internationally known for her work on SEA and sustainability assessment, as our keynote speaker for that meeting and she gave a stimulating talk that set the scene for the rest of the conference. It was also a pleasure to have a presentation on SEA in the Pacific from Jope Davetanivalu and Melanie Bradley from the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), another of our MoU partners. Conference presentations about New Zealand SEA experiences emphasised the diversity of approaches being used in different sectors and contexts, but also the lack of a coherent model, and the lack of a clear mandate, for SEA in this country, hence NZAIA’s continuing interest in promoting this as an area for development and improvement.

On behalf of the Association I’d like to thank the 2016 conference organising team (in particular Hamish Rennie, Nick Taylor, Mike Mackay, ably supported by Katherine Russell) for all their hard work in putting on the conference. It was an excellent and well attended event.

Two other important activities for NZAIA are the newsletter and submissions. We revived the newsletter last year in electronic form and while output has been limited so far we are developing a publication model that focuses on particular themes and pulls together interesting news and comment from the perspective of impact assessment. A newsletter on on marine issues and IA is very close to being sent out. Newsletters are group activities, and people involved will vary according to topics, but I’d like to thank Gilly Stewart in particular for driving the fresh approach, supported by Nick Taylor, Katherine Russell, and Ben Payne.

Submissions lift the NZAIA profile as a champion for IA in this country. We list completed submission on the website, which show that after a busy 2016, this year has been quieter with our submission on the MfE’s Clean Water consultation the main contribution so far. This is an activity we need to maintain, but keeping track of opportunities is challenging. We have largely relied on word of mouth in the past but since July the NZAIA website has had links to the main New Zealand government consultation website, and also the MFe website, so people can keep an eye on possible consultation opportunities and contact the core group (admin@nzaia.org.nz) if they feel NZAIA should be speaking up. We are also keen to encourage members to be involved in generating submissions: when we start a submission process we alert members, and invite them to get in touch or to post their comments directly on the relevant Google Docs site (access instructions are given on our Submission page of the website when we have processes running).

Other items of interest:

* Our application to be accepted back onto the Charities Register was finally successful and we resumed our charitable status in July this year.
* As we are not holding a conference of our own, we decided this year to provide three scholarships to assist students to attend the EIANZ conference. We received eight strong applications which made selection difficult, but in the end awarded scholarships to Weqas Ali (Massey Univ), Kate McNab and Rachel Teen (both Lincoln University).
* NZAIA is now an Affiliate Organisation of the Royal Society Te Apārangi. We hope this will help raise the profile of NZAIA and of impact assessment in this country.

There are two people I’d like to thank: James Baines has been our liaison with EIANZ, and especially their Special Interest Section on IA, over the last couple of years but has decided to step down. I’d like to thank him for his work on our behalf. We will be looking for someone to replace him: volunteers welcome! My thanks also go to Ben Payne who will relinquish the Treasurer position after the 2017 AGM. Despite him taking up a challenging new job at GNS, we look forward to keeping Ben in the core group.

My thanks also go to this year’s core group for their sterling work. In particular I’d like to thank Nick Taylor for standing in as chair from March to May, while I was overseas on research and study leave, and keeping things ticking over very smoothly in my absence! My thanks are also extended to Christine for her work as Secretary, and to Katherine Russell, not only for conference administration last year but also for the support she has given to Christine and myself in helping manage membership processes, providing news updates to elists, and so forth. She also finds time to help with submissions, social media, and newsletter production.

Richard Morgan

27 October 2017

 **Finances**

The financial statement for 2016 is available on the website. The finances reflect our return to a 2 day conference last year, with a significant increase in income from conference registrations. However, it is important to note the liabilities at the end of 2016, mainly the main 2016 conference expenses (catering, keynote speaker costs, etc.), paid in 2017. They should be deducted from the end of year balance to see the underlying picture, which was in fact much improved on the previous year and provided the means to support the three scholarships in 2017 while retaining healthy capital for future conference organisation.

The On-call funds provide the long term buffer for our finances, but at present earn very little interest, so are in effect losing value. The core group recently decided to investigate term deposits as a better option for those funds.