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NZ Chapter Newsletter

# EIANZ

August 2009

## FROM THE EDITOR

*Erik van Eyndhoven*

As always, the efforts of contributors to the newsletter are greatly appreciated, especially those who make regular contributions. The content should reflect the interests of the wider membership, so I would encourage members who have interests not currently covered by the newsletter to contribute something for the next issue. If you haven't previously contributed something to the newsletter I suggest that you set it

as a goal to contribute at least one article or item each year. It's a great opportunity to get your view across and to stimulate dialogue.

The deadline for contributions to the next newsletter will be Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 – send your articles, news items, events or ideas to me at [erik.vaneyndhoven@maf.govt.nz](mailto:erik.vaneyndhoven@maf.govt.nz).

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Tom Burkitt ([nzpresident@eianz.org.nz](mailto:nzpresident@eianz.org.nz))*

I was fortunate enough this month for my work to take me to the Northern Territories of Australia. If you've been there before, you will appreciate the impact of the vast and intricately shaped arid landscape from the air. It's quite a breathtaking and remarkable place, and I enjoyed my choppy flight to the mine's dirt airstrip.

The Granites Mine is situated approximately 200km north-west of Alice Springs, near the state border with Western Australia. It is owned by Newmont Mining ([www.newmont.com](http://www.newmont.com)) and I flew in to work with their environmental team, a group of dedicated and able environmental practitioners working in an industry that poses significant challenges during operations and landscape rehabilitation following cessation of mining activity. They work 12 hour days on a 9-day on / 5-day off rota. If that isn't enough, two of them are undertaking distance

learning degrees and completing their assignments in the evenings. Also, quite remarkable.

Meeting the Newmont team made me consider our Institute's role in supporting environmental practitioners and industrial employers, and what steps we might take to improve the value of membership to such individuals. I feel that we have a relatively strong base amongst consultants, academics, and we do have members from regulatory bodies too. However, I'm not certain that we've got the formula right yet for those practitioners who often find themselves working on their own in industry and in relative isolation.

I invite any thoughts members have about what they might want. Certainly, I think a strong training programme is vital, and I'm looking forward to implementing the STEP programme towards CEnvP in Australia and NZ. Also, let me know what



you think we can do to better link "like-with-like" roles nationally to improve knowledge transfer and increase the value of the Institute's network.

Changing tack, our AGM and preceding Ethics Panel Discussion were a great success on the 29th of July. We had a good turnout in person in Christchurch and via the phone link. Several key matters arose from the AGM and - most notably - there was one change to our NZ Executive. Belinda van Eyndhoven has stepped down as VP of the New Zealand Chapter, and I am pleased to confirm that Vanessa Browne was elected in to the role of VP. I wish to thank Belinda for her work in the role, and I look forward to the opportunity to work more closely with Vanessa. Belinda will remain on the Executive team and retain the membership portfolio.

Reflecting on the last year as NZ President, I wish to reiterate a couple of points that I made in an earlier newsletter. The first is that I never cease to be impressed by the calibre of our members, their

knowledge, and their commitment to the environmental profession. With an organisation such as ours I believe you get more value if you take full advantage of the national networking opportunities it provides, and I encourage you all to continue to do so. The second point I'll make is that I believe we bat beyond our weight. Our events are strong and our influence is growing. However, we achieve all this due to the efforts of exceptional volunteers. New volunteers with fresh and innovative ideas are most welcome, so why not consider stepping up this year to support your local branch. It's fun.

And finally from me... Have a look at our channel on YouTube >>> [www.youtube.com/nzeianz](http://www.youtube.com/nzeianz) This is a resource that we aim to develop over time. If you have any recommendations for content, please send them to [admin@eianz.org.nz](mailto:admin@eianz.org.nz) or call me on 03 341 4760.

Have a great spring season.

## GREEN MARKETING

*Sam Bridgman – Advisor carbonZero programme Landcare Research*

Green Marketing is not a new concept; it is used by a number of businesses to attract customers to their products and services. In the past this advertising generally consisted of generic claims that producers or their products/services were 'green' or their products are 'eco-friendly'.

Nowadays, as more and more businesses are seeking the 'green' market share, consumers, stakeholders and competitors are demanding more substantial proof behind the green claims. The Commerce Commission has recently focussed on the topic, releasing guidelines on green claims (December 2008) and draft guidelines on carbon claims (February 2009)<sup>1</sup>. This is an effort to rein in some of the inflated, inaccurate or unsubstantiated "green" or "low carbon/carbon neutral" claims made by environmental schemes, organisations and individuals.

The Commerce Commission is "vigorously" chasing any complaints about questionable "green" products, or any deceptive marketing designed to portray a company or product as caring for the environment.

But when we see an environmental claim, all of us (acting as environmental professionals and/or producers/consumers) should ask:

- is the claim accurate?
- can the claim be substantiated (i.e., is there further information about the claim from a company website or other source)?
- is the claim specific and made in plain language?
- is there a real environmental benefit?
- does the claim refer to the organisation, the product or the product packaging?
- is the claim backed up with reputable certification?
- does a picture of a tree (or cute animal) represent a 'real' environmental claim?

Organisations need to be careful that their misdirected enthusiasm does not land them in hot water. Breaching the Fair Trading Act through Greenwash may result in large financial penalties of up to \$60,000 for an individual and \$200,000 for a company for each offence.

<sup>1</sup> [www.comcom.govt.nz](http://www.comcom.govt.nz)



Gaining independent certification from a reputable certifier can go a long way to back up a green claim and it is worth pursuing.

As the green market increases in future years it will be an interesting space to watch.

## SYSTEMATIC, TRANSPARENT PRIORITISATION

Ross Cullen

The recently released Statistics New Zealand report on Sustainable Development includes biodiversity amongst its measures. The selected biodiversity indicators are used to chart progress, or lack of it, compared to earlier assessments. Statistics New Zealand's summary of results is... *"The distribution of seven native 'indicator' species has declined over the three decades to 2007. Most of this decline is attributed to predation and competition from introduced pests and habitat loss. Between 2002 and 2005, the threat status worsened rather than improved for a greater number of native species. However, native land cover changed very little between 1997 and 2002."*

That brief comment provides some insight into the nature and scale of the challenges New Zealand faces in managing its biodiversity. New Zealand has a very large number of threatened and endangered species. About 2,800 of New Zealand's estimated 90,000 indigenous species are listed as threatened and a further 3,000 are listed as data deficient (Hitchmough 2007). Large numbers of introduced animal (including 32 mammal species) and 16,000 plants species predate on or compete with indigenous species. Land use conversion still occurs and resulted in 175 km<sup>2</sup> loss of indigenous habitat between 1996-2002 (OECD 2007).

Government (national, regional and local), a range of Not for Profits and businesses, and hundreds of individuals apply effort to combat the threats, halt the decline and restore the dawn chorus, midday katydid chirrup and sighing forests. The resources available to tackle the challenges of managing biodiversity are limited. The efforts applied, have to date proved insufficient to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss. Given the scale of the challenge how can society best allocate the limited resources available to manage biodiversity? This sounds like and indeed is a classic economic problem – there are not enough resources available to tackle all problems simultaneously. We have to make hard choices and determine priorities.

The value to humans, threats, home range areas, effectiveness, cost, speed of response to biodiversity projects, vary between species and projects. Kiwis are iconic, known world wide, long

## AND REPEATABLE SPECIES

lived, slow population growth rate species and have many vertebrate predators. Maud Island Frog occurred only on one island and are vulnerable to disease, pollution and predation. *Pittosporum patulum* is found only in the eastern South Island in sub-alpine scrub and in canopy gaps of mountain beech forest above 800 metres. It faces threats from possums, deer, goats and rats. *Dactylanthus* or woodrose, is a flowering parasitic plant which grows on the roots of trees on the forest floor. It faces threats from browsing, habitat depletion, collection, reduced pollination.

There are plenty of options on how biodiversity management resources might be allocated. Six strategies that could be considered are: most at risk threatened species first; most iconic threatened species first; most popular species first; most genetically important threatened species first; low cost threatened species first; equal expenditures on all threatened species; most cost-effective projects first.

The choices we make inevitably require tradeoffs or forgoing some actions and possible outcomes.

Researchers in a few countries have explored the likely outcomes from pursuing prioritisation strategies somewhat like those listed above (Metrick & Weitzman 1996; Joseph et al., 2009; Doerksen et al., 1998). After some years of seemingly opaque approaches to prioritisation of biodiversity projects, New Zealand is now at the forefront of efforts applying systematic, transparent and repeatable methods to prioritisation. Liana Joseph, Richard Maloney and Hugh Possingham (2009) report how they have developed a Project Prioritisation Protocol (PPP), and with input from 105 experts, investigated the impacts of varying approaches to prioritisation of more than 2,000 species. Project management parameters (costs, benefit and probability of success) and species parameters (taxonomic distinctiveness and threat status) were used to characterise over 2,000 species projects. Five priority-setting methods (weighted efficiency; unweighted efficiency; cost; distinctiveness; threat status) were used to investigate tradeoffs between projects.





Their paper reports the ranks for species projects depending on choice of weighting method. *Dactylanthus* for example ranks: 1, 2, 7, 1, 27; North Island Brown Kiwi ranks: 5, 19, 30, 2, 28. The concluding words of Joseph et al., (2009: 10) are notable for their economic content and their importance for conservation. "We demonstrated that to select management actions that maximize conservation outcomes, it is insufficient to prioritize species based solely on threat status or species value. Correspondingly, return on investment of conservation dollars is substantially improved by incorporating management costs, benefit, and likelihood of management success. Consequently, the number of species managed and the expected overall benefit to threatened species is increased remarkably."

The PPP approach is certainly a major advance in prioritisation methods. PPP could be modified to include other characteristics of species such as ecosystem importance (Perry 2006). The introduction of PPP may provide a means in future to determine how best to integrate State and NFP species conservation efforts. Systematic, transparent, repeatable systems are to be hailed for their ability to lead to most effective use of species conservation dollars.

## CERTIFICATION: TRENDS AND ECOLOGY

The Certified Environmental Practitioner Programme (CEnvP) is now well established in New Zealand and Australia. The benefits for the individual, the employer, the profession and, of course, the environment are becoming widely recognised. I predict that in the not-too-distant future, there will be a requirement that only certified environmental practitioners will be permitted to sign off on some environmental reports.

The CEnvP is based on sound criteria and there is a very rigorous assessment process. There is also the requirement that there be evidence of continuing professional development. The criteria are fairly generic and it was always planned that at some stage these criteria could possibly be extended to meet the specific needs of various sectors in the environment profession. This is now beginning to happen with discussions taking place about the possibility of meeting the specific needs of ecologists. Already, some ecologists have successfully obtained certification. However, as one of the many sectors, ecology seemed one that could be considered in respect to the criteria used for the CEnvP.

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So what's happening? The Ecological Society has been brought into the discussions and members of the Society have been invited to comment. In addition, a small group of ecologists throughout New Zealand have been invited to comment on the current criteria and discuss how it may be possible to extend or modify these criteria to meet the needs of ecological practitioners. I believe that this is very timely because in New Zealand and Australia there is clear evidence of wide ranging standards of practice in ecology. One has only to look at some ecological assessments to see examples of the wide-ranging standards.

This is an opportunity for ecologists to contribute to the discussion and I urge people to do just that. In my opinion, it is not about if this will happen, it is about when. That is, I believe that environmental practitioners will increasingly aspire to certification and that ecologists will soon be able to aspire to certification that is specific to the ecology profession. If you would like to comment, I would love to hear from you. Alternatively please contact Dr. Simon Mustoe, Convenor of the Ecology Special Interest Section of the EIANZ.



## STUDENT MATTERS

Students do matter and students are the future environmental practitioners. I have no hesitation in saying to postgraduates in my classes that if they aim to be environmental practitioners then they must become a member of a professional institute and must aspire to certification. Their education does not end at graduation and indeed as with other professions, there is a need for continuing professional development. I often think that it is so ironic that of all professions, the environment profession has been the last to have opportunities for promoting high standards of ethics and professional conduct. This has happened long ago for law, medicine, engineering and many other professions. We have long had an environmental imperative and never before has there been such a need to have the most competent environmental practitioners.

Students do matter and I believe that the New Zealand Chapter of the EIANZ must do as much as possible to engage with students, particularly those in the tertiary sector. My vision for the not-too-distant future would be to have EIANZ student groups in all tertiary institutions. Since the time when the New Zealand Chapter was first established, we have concentrated our efforts on existing environmental practitioners and employers. That was well justified but we now need considerable efforts to engage with future environmental practitioners be they ecologists, environmental policy analysts, environmental scientists or in any other sector of the environment profession.

As an academic I have a particular interest in this matter and for my part I have initiated two projects. The first is the award of prizes to postgraduate students in universities (The Postgraduate Student Awards). Two prizes are offered twice each year, one for a thesis and one for an assignment. This project has now been running for two years and on

each occasion the New Zealand Chapter has written to all vice chancellors informing them about these student awards. The recipients of these prizes receive two years free membership and \$250 worth of book vouchers. I am most grateful to Kristina Healy who has very kindly put a lot of effort into this initiative and made it happen.

The second project has been very difficult to establish. My idea was to establish a framework or mechanism for passing EIANZ information to students in universities. To achieve this, I thought it would be useful to identify a willing person in each university who in turn would receive and pass on information from the EIANZ to the students. It took some considerable time to identify those willing people who would be the conduits. In the process, I discovered that some of my environmental colleagues were not clear as to the difference between a scholarly society and a professional institute.

I am now pleased to say that I have a contact person in each university and that I now periodically send information on to be distributed to those students who may have an interest in one of the many sectors of the environment profession. I suggest that a next important step would be for EIANZ members to volunteer to meet with such students. At the same time I would recommend that all EIANZ committees have places for student membership. I believe that everything we do in the EIANZ Institute must offer opportunities for student participation.

Ian Spellerberg,  
Vice President (New Zealand)  
[vice-presidentnz@eianz.org](mailto:vice-presidentnz@eianz.org)

## TOP AWARD GOES TO TAURANGA SCHOLAR

One man keen to ensure the longevity of New Zealand's clean green image is Tauranga man Reece Irving. Reece was recently awarded the prestigious EIANZ prize for most outstanding Bachelor of Applied Science graduate in

Environmental Studies 2008. Now contracting to Environment Bay of Plenty's Pollution Prevention Team, Reece is a recent graduate of AUT's Bachelor of Applied Science (offered at Bay of Plenty Polytechnic).



The award was presented to Reece by Kristina Healey (EIANZ Auckland Branch Coordinator) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May at a AUT University prize giving ceremony.

(Article largely sourced from Bay of Plenty Polytech: [www.boppoly.ac.nz](http://www.boppoly.ac.nz))



## THINGS OF INTEREST

### Exploring the residual landscape

For a striking view of human impact on the earth, check out: <http://www.edwardburtynsky.com/>

### EWOF- get recognised!

There is a new environmental certification available in New Zealand that is designed specifically for small and medium sized businesses. The EWOFF Site Standard sets a minimum standard of environmental performance while addressing environmental, business, and consumer concerns. The EWOFF Site Standard is the first of a series of business products to be launched by EWOFF Limited. More information can be found on the website [www.ewof.co.nz](http://www.ewof.co.nz) or by email [info@ewof.co.nz](mailto:info@ewof.co.nz).

## CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

### FRIDAY FORUM #17 - CHRISTCHURCH on Sustainable Economics

**When:** Friday, 4 September 2009

**Time:** 9am – 12 noon

**Where:** MWH Limited, Board Room, 7 Deans Ave, Christchurch

**Speakers:** Emeritus Professor Rick Sibson / Dr John Peet / Dr Ian Mason

Rick will make a presentation on "Peak Oil - Past, Present, or Future?"

John will make a presentation on "What Might Sustainable Economics Look Like?"

Ian will make a presentation on "Emissions Trading – a success story and future prospects".

**Fees:** Free for members of NZSSES      \$40 incl. GST for non members

**Register:** Email Vicky today at [vicky@nzsses.org.nz](mailto:vicky@nzsses.org.nz)



## 2009 Environment Institute of Australia & New Zealand Conference: Policy to Practice

**Date:** 20-21 October 2009

**Venue:** Hotel Realm, Canberra

**Website:** <http://www.conlog.com.au/eianz/>

This conference is for all environmental professionals across Australia and New Zealand who are interested in policy development and the practice of implementing policy to achieve better environment outcomes. This Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) conference represents an opportunity for practitioners to discuss which environmental policies work and why. It is expected that the conference will cover a broad range of traditional policy issues from soil conservation, environmental impact assessment and endangered species protection through contemporary policy issues such as water security, climate change risk assessment and carbon pollution reduction.

### CONFERENCE THEME

One of the most challenging tasks for environmental professionals today is being able to thoroughly understand and practically implement the environmental policies of a national government. Over the last few years, the national environmental policy framework in Australia and New Zealand has changed significantly. The policy issues that are expected to be covered at the conference are likely to include, but are not limited to the following:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Biosecurity
- Carbon pollution
- Compliance and enforcement
- Community consultation
- Climate change
- Energy and emissions auditing
- Environmental assessment
- Environmental information
- Environmental offsets
- Green buildings
- Groundwater management
- Heritage conservation
- Indigenous land management
- Marine park planning
- Natural resource management
- Protected area management
- Research and development
- Recycling
- Renewable Energy
- Site contamination
- State of the environment reporting
- Sustainability
- Threatened species
- Waste management
- Water quality
- Water resource planning
- Wetlands

### KEY DATES

- Closing date for submission of abstracts: 12 June 2009
- Notification of acceptance of abstracts: 2 July 2009
- Last day for Early Registration: 31 July 2009

## New Zealand Biosecurity Institute annual conference

The New Zealand Biosecurity Institutes annual conference is to be held in Queenstown this year from 14-16 October at the Rydges Hotel.

The theme for this years' conference is 'Remarkable Changes'. This recognises both the remarkable location that Queenstown is, and the remarkable changes that have taken place in pest management



and biosecurity over the past 30 past years. The conference will also explore some of the changes we may see in biosecurity in the coming years. If you're intending to be involved in biosecurity in the future, you should be in Queenstown for NETS 2009.

As well as the location and venue, other highlights include speakers such as John Hellstrom - one of New Zealand's forward thinkers in biosecurity, and Professor Phillip Hume from the Bio-Protection and Ecology Division at Lincoln University. There will also be the opportunity to learn about biosecurity issues from those at the coal face of pest management.

The landscape of Central Otago has also seen remarkable changes over time - some not necessarily for the better. The scheduled field trips for NETS 2009 will showcase this amazing part of the country and the pressures it has had to contend - from both pests and people.

Registrations for NETS 2009 will be available from the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute's website at [www.biosecurity.org.nz](http://www.biosecurity.org.nz)

### **EIANZ NZ Chapter Sub-Committees**

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*Vacant*

Policy and Program Coordinator:

*Vacant*

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