

Dr. Simon Hudson Memorial Workshop: Ecological Impact Assessment Guidelines for Australia

EIANZ Annual Conference 2016

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Workshop Timing

- 3:30 pm – 3:35 pm: Introduction (5 mins)
- 3:35 pm – 4:00 pm: Presentation (25 mins)
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm: Group work (30 mins)
- 4:00 pm – 4:55 pm: Discussion (25 mins)
- 4:55 pm – 5:00 pm: Closing remarks and next steps (5 mins)

Workshop Program

- Review Process
- Background
- The EclA Guidelines for use in New Zealand
- Overview of Draft EclA Guidelines
 - Purpose
 - Define EclA
 - Principles and Aims
 - Process
 - Measuring Value and Significance
 - Impacts and Mitigation (Offsets)
- Discussion

Review Process

- Lead Author and working group to be established
- Timing
 - When do we want a final ready by?
- Reviews
 - Define review process, scope, expectations
- Publishing
 - Various options: Electronic, hard copy, webpage
 - Costs
- Publicity
 - Launch, endorsement from other organisations, integration with government policy

Background

- Working draft EclA Guidelines for Australia and New Zealand released 2010
- Based on Guidelines for EclA in the UK developed by the Council of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2006 updated 2015) & Special Publications of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) (1999, 2005).
- New Zealand Chapter commenced review of the Guidelines in 2010 for the NZ context.
- Final EclA Guidelines for NZ released 2015.

EcIA Guidelines for use in New Zealand

- **Introduction**
 - Definition, key steps, legislation
- **Professional practice and EcIA**
 - Professional ecologist, ethics and conduct, employers and clients, professional development
- **Scoping**
 - What to cover, methods, issues
- **Description of existing environment**
 - Spatial frameworks, physical environment and processes, biological components (existing information, surveys)
- **Assigning value or importance**
 - Assigning value at species, population and ecosystem levels, assigning value to ecosystem services.
- **Assessing effects**
 - Activities and effects during project lifecycle (pre-construction, construction, operation, decommissioning), effects on ecological features, magnitude, cumulative impacts
- **Impact management**
 - Avoid, minimise, mitigate, offsets, adaptive management
- **Monitoring**
 - Purpose, type, design of programmes

Working Draft: Purpose

- The purpose of such guidelines will be to provide a reference, developed by the profession, describing what EcIA is and how it should be done. The Guidelines will help to:
 - improve confidence in the profession's ability to independently and objectively implement environmental standards;
 - guide the development of statutory policy, including raising expectation for professional standards;
 - improve consistency in EcIA (as a component of EIA), so decision-makers can have more confidence in the accuracy of the information provided;
 - fill some of the gaps in policy, where it may not necessarily be prudent to codify standards in law;
 - address some of the common difficulties in EcIA;
 - ensure that EcIA is given appropriate consideration within the broader EIA process; and
 - provide a source of reference for new and upcoming consultants to learn about one of the key components of their trade, for their own professional development.

Working Draft: Define EcIA

- Treweek, (1999) defines EcIA as “the process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating the potential impacts of defined actions on ecosystems or their components; and providing a scientifically defensible approach to ecosystem management. Impact assessment is defined by the IAIA as the process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action. It is used to ensure that policies, plans, programmes and projects are economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable” (IAIA, 1999).

Working Draft: Basic Principles

- Purposive
- Rigorous
- Practical
- Relevant
- Cost-effective
- Efficient
- Focussed
- Adaptive
- Participative
- Interdisciplinary
- Credible
- Integrated
- Transparent
- Systematic

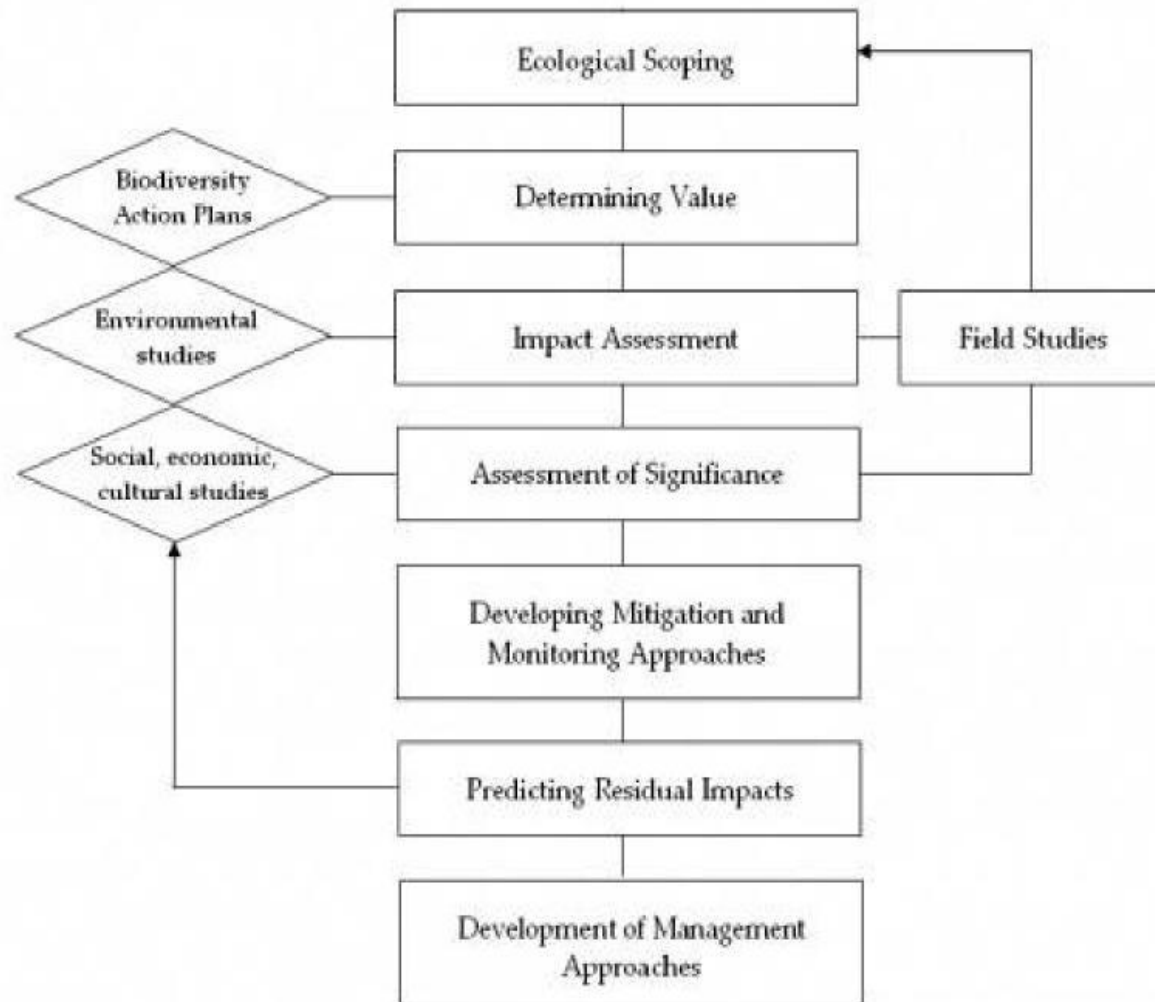
Working Draft: Guiding Principles

- Conservation and no net loss of biodiversity
- Take an ecosystem approach
- Seek Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Resources
- Ensure Equitable Sharing
- Apply the Precautionary Principle
- Take a Participatory Approach

Working Draft: Operating Principles (Process)

- Screening
- Scoping
- Examination of alternatives
- Impact analysis
- Mitigation and impact management
- Evaluation of significance
- Preparation of environmental impact assessment (EIA)
- Review for decision-making
- Decision making
- Management, monitoring, evaluation and auditing

Working Draft: Process of EcIA



Working Draft: Determining Value

- Separate legal status
- Ecosystem services
- Social and indigenous value
- Economic value
- Geographic frame of reference
- Designated sites and features

Working Draft: Measuring biodiversity value

- ANZECC criteria for assigning conservation value for marine protected areas
 - Representativeness
 - Ecological importance
 - Uniqueness
 - Productivity
 - Vulnerability
 - Biogeographic importance
 - Naturalness

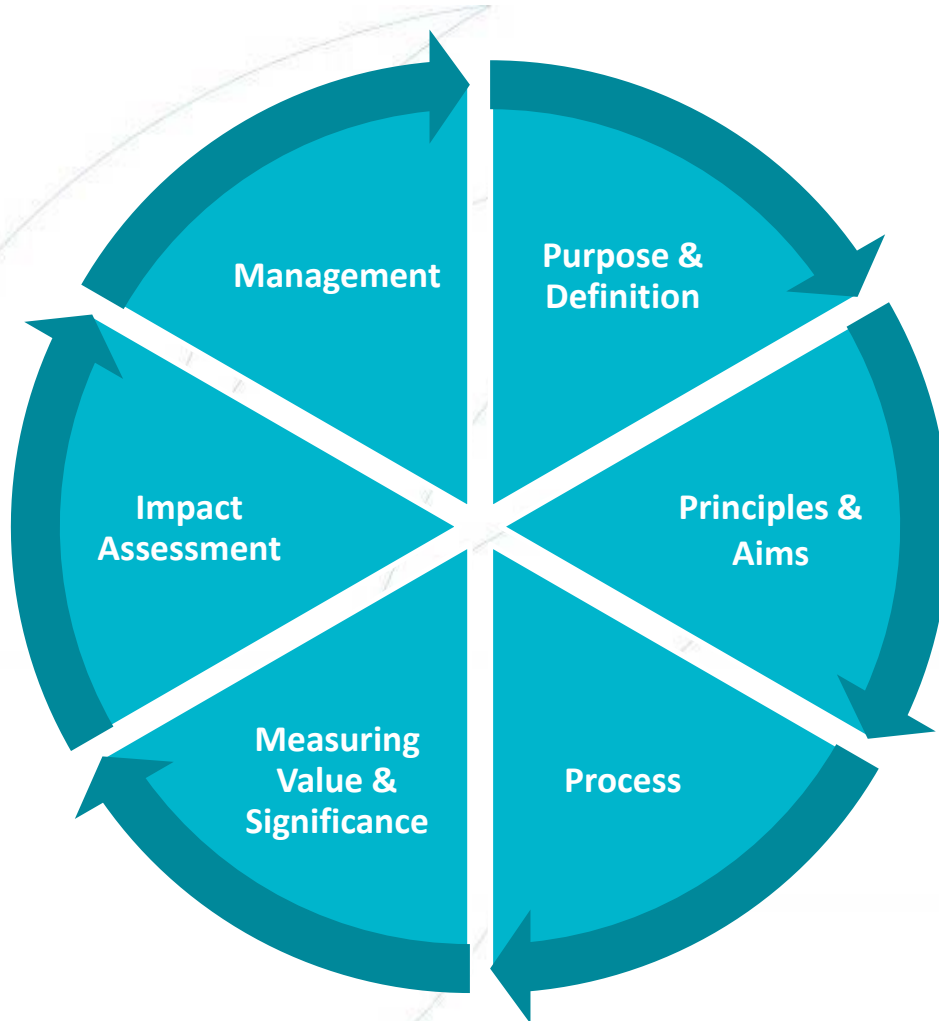
Working Draft: Impact Assessment

- Predicting and characterising impacts
- Confidence in predictions
- Magnitude
- Extent
- Duration
- Reversibility
- Timing and frequency
- Ecologically significant impacts

Working Draft: Management

- Management hierarchy: Avoid, minimise, mitigate (offset)
- Adaptive management
- Monitoring and continual improvement
- Residual impacts
- Offsets

Group Work



Group Work

- Form 6 equal groups
- Each group assigned a section for discussion
 - As a group, review the relevant section of the working draft
 - Capture the main points of each section
 - What are the strengths or weaknesses of the section?
 - What should be included/excluded?
 - What needs to change for the Australian context? Align with EPBC Act for example?
- Don't necessarily want a detailed discussion – we are interested in ideas, direction, overview and application.
- Spend 10 minutes about the review process and record notes about group preferences.
- Report back to the group & open discussion

Workshop Close

- Where to from here? Watch your emails!
- Seeking volunteers to form a Working Group.
- Will agree on the review process.
- Need to approach the Board for funding.
- Contact
 - Dave Fleming, dfleming@ehpartners.com.au or 0407 512 176