



PETER TAYLOR MEIANZ

SENIOR PARTNER | SMK  
CONSULTANTS

Joined the Institute in 2004

---

*“Use your degree to solve a problem not just simply to find the problem!”*

---



Environment Institute  
of Australia and  
New Zealand Inc.

*What prompted you to join EIANZ?*

We were undertaking a contaminated site project which required me to be a member of a professional group. EIANZ was on the list of professional groups. I had not heard of the Institute previously as my career has mainly extended across regional rural Australia. I joined as a matter of interest and professional development to remain in contact with the environmental profession.

*What do you value most about being a member?*

Maintaining contact with the environmental profession. This mainly occurs through the annual conference as I am located too far to attend any state based committees.

*Has being a member helped you develop mentoring relationships and/or extend your professional networks? Can you tell us about the impact these relationships have had on your career development?*

Occasionally my work brings me in contact with other members around Australia. This provides some confidence in their abilities and care for the profession. I was an official EIANZ mentor for an extended period and assisted a young professional who has now departed the region. Professionally, I have trained possibly a dozen or more graduates to become environmental consultants in the past 20-years. This has been rewarding to watch their careers develop from a strong base. Some of this base can be attributed to professional networks from EIANZ, but unfortunately I must say that EIANZ, like many other professions, does not have a strong membership recognition in rural Australia. Rural Australia is a results based industry that rewards on knowledge and the ability to adopt appropriate methodology and obtain an outcome that is practical. This need for practicality has driven my professional career and I instil this in my staff.

*What do you find most rewarding about a career in the environment sector?*

The environmental sector covers a great deal of disciplines. These disciplines work from an environmental/science knowledge base but cover a great deal of other skills and abilities. The rural sector did not welcome environmental scientists in the mid-80s as we were declared as simple ‘greenies’ with no idea how the world worked. It took many years for rural industries to embrace the concept of using an environmental consultant as part of their daily operations. It is now a rewarding career, having the knowledge that industries such as the cotton industry have adopted a strong environmental policy which contrasts with an attitude that the ‘greenies’ want to stop everything. Many rural landowners now understand that the environmental sector includes people that do understand their production and can improve such with some science.

*What advice would you give to recent graduates just starting out in the environment sector?*

On the first day of my environmental science degree, the Dean told us clearly that none of us would be employed as environmental scientists for 20-years or more. This was very true at the time as there were no environmental scientists working in rural Australia other than specialists such as botanists and zoologists. I therefore added to my degree with other disciplines and project experience to use the knowledge gained from an environmental science degree to solve problems. All of my graduate staff are given the same advice. “Use your degree to solve a problem not just simply to find the problem!”

Celebrating

30  
years

1987 - 2017