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RETIRED
Joined the Institute in 1987

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What was EIANZ like in the early years? Why did you decide to get involved?

I became involved with EIA(NZ) when it was first established because I had been working in the environment profession to 15 years and was desperately seeking a professional body that catered to my interests. While I had joined several other bodies which partly addressed these interests, there was none that fully reflected the needs of an environmental practitioner. The EIA provided that opportunity. There were probably many others in a similar situation, particularly consultants, and they embraced the new organisation with great enthusiasm.

Who were/are some of your career mentors? Tell us about them.

When I began my career as an environmental practitioner in 1972, there was no recognised environmental profession, and nobody to act as a mentor in a strict sense. There were several people whose advice or attitude strongly influenced my career development, including:

- **John Gray** - Senior lecturer at the Canberra CAE, where I undertook supplementary studies to start my career. He strongly advised me to accept a minor consultancy with the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), which led to a permanent position with that organisation.
- **Hans Westerman** - Associate Commissioner at NCDC, with a town planning background. Convinced me to accept a permanent position at NCDC, setting up its new Environment Section, which I headed for eight years. He was very supportive of the professional approach that I developed for the Section.
- **Keith Storey** - Principal town planner at NCDC, with whom I worked regularly. He had a strong positive attitude towards achieving high quality environmental outcomes, in contrast to the emerging negative legislative approach of just preventing and managing adverse impacts.
- **Ray Margules** - A forester turned landscape architect consultant, who displayed a high level of commonsense in his advice, sometimes in contrast to the approaches adopted by academics and regulators at the time (and since).
- **Angela Sands** - Social planner at NCDC who influenced my thinking on the importance of considering the effects on people, rather than just biophysical effects, in all environmental work.

What are some of the most important lessons you have learned over the course of your career?

Throughout my professional career, some of the lessons I have learnt are as follows:

- ‘Tell it as it is’. Provide advice that you believe in, not necessarily what people want to hear.
- Be courageous. If you believe you are right, don’t be intimidated by bureaucrats, environmental extremists, advocates and others whose views are often narrowly based and biased.
- Write well, clearly, objectively and sensitively. Encourage and consider feedback on what you have written.

Thinking about the last 30 years, what stands out to you as the highlight or most significant achievement of the Institute?

Probably the establishment of the CEnvP scheme, although it still has a long way to go to earn the recognition that it deserves, particularly with regard to the technical aspects of the environmental specialties which the EIANZ caters for better than any other organisation.

Why has EIANZ membership remained a priority for you over the last 30 years?

I have retained my EIANZ membership over the last 30 years because the Institute is the only organisation that adequately caters for my professional needs. In addition, it is the professional organisation to which I feel I can best contribute on the basis of my experience.

What advice would you give to new members of the Institute?

My advice to new members is to get involved in Institute activities, even if many of them do not seem relevant to your current professional needs. Interacting with other members will get you better known among other environmental professionals, and may open up new opportunities and influence your career path. Particularly if you work in a regulatory authority, it is important to recognise that there is much more to ‘real world’ environmental practice than your current position offers and, if you don’t want to be consigned to a professional backwater, you should try to discover the professional world outside your own organisation.