



## ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND INC.

Annual Report of Aotearoa New Zealand Chapter President 2020-2021 (Mark Bellingham)

For presentation at the Annual General Meeting, 24 August 2021

Welcome to the 2021 AGM, at the end of my first term as President of the Aotearoa New Zealand Chapter, I must admit it has been another challenging year with Covid19 restrictions hanging over us and another one on us!.

I recognise the importance of EIANZ as a forum for environmental professionals and as an advocate for the environment. Already I see a major role to be played by EIANZ in the proposed environmental legislation changes with overlapping National Policy statements and the rewrite of the RMA. This will occupy our attention for a number of years.

We need to step up, in the same way that the Institute is currently participating in the review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act in Australia, which has involved a collaborative approach with like-minded organisations. It is crucial that practitioners' voices are heard.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Chapter Executive Committee (EC) has four elected 'officers' (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary), one ex-officio officer being a member of the EIANZ Board, up to three Councillors, and any other number of ex-officio members co-opted for specific duties.

Kirsty Austin has been a sterling Secretary but is standing down from the executive. Her excellent administrative skills have guided us through the past three years in particular.

Earlier this year Alison Davis stood down as Treasurer and Kevin Tearney stepped in as the interim Treasurer.

Keith Calder moved to the UK for work and generously agreed to stay on the EC to assist as a committee member and newsletter editor. With Keith in the UK we have alternated our monthly meetings to fit with his time zone. Keith also took on the production of Stepping Up, adding a lively international flavour on our Aotearoa EIANZ Facebook page in the 2020/2021 year.

Isobel Oldfield was elected as the Aotearoa New Zealand Board Vice President for and is the ex-officio Board role as VP New Zealand. Isobel has been an active member of EIANZ since 2012 and has held the SEC role for New Zealand for over two years. We thank her for offering to fill the Branch coordinator role.

We welcomed Shannen Barnes as our SEC representative on the EC. As part of this role Shannen has joined the Australia and New Zealand Student and Early Careers Committee and is responsible for advocating for Aotearoa New Zealand Student and Early career members.

The current EC therefore comprises the following people and roles:

### Officers 2020-21

President:	Mark Bellingham
Vice-President:	Ian Boothroyd
Secretary:	Kirsty Austin
Treasurer (Interim):	Kevin Tearney



Ex-officio (VP NZ)	Isobel Oldfield (also Branch Coordinator)
Committee	Keith Calder – Roaming ambassador & Stepping Up & Facebook editor
	Shannen Barns – SEC

Maia Bellingham ended her invaluable admin support in January, when she graduated and took up a position as a contaminated land scientist at WSP in Auckland.

The make-up of the EC is subject to annual nominations and if necessary, elections. Information about the nomination process has been sent to you all from Central Office. We aim to finalise these positions at our AGM.

With the exception of Kirstie Austin, all committee members are standing again.

And if you wish to be involved in the EC in any capacity, please get your nominations in so that we can decide the make-up of the 2021-2022 EC.

My thanks go to the current Executive Committee for the valuable work they have all done throughout the year.

Following is a selection of highlights from the year gone, what's coming up, and other information that I hope will be of interest.

Of course, Covid-19 continues to dominate our family and work lives, also meaning that EIANZ has had to adapt. A key part of being an EIANZ member is being able to easily access networking and technical learning events. Covid-19 put the brakes on face to face events, but Central Office (in Melbourne) took us all into the virtual world of Zoom and Teams and EIANZ now successfully hosts events and meetings via Zoom, including our branch-wide virtual seminars.

#### Executive Committee

The Aotearoa New Zealand Chapter EC has continued to meet on a monthly basis by Zoom, with meeting alternating between lunch times and evenings to allow Keith to beam in from the UK in the morning – rather than the dead of night. At our executive meetings we mainly discuss operational matters and ongoing initiatives.

We postponed the 2021 annual face to face meeting until after the AGM, that was to be in Wellington. Thank goodness as Covid lockdown would have ruled that out!

This year we again focussed on bringing professional development events to members via branch events and webinars on Zoom, which is now much easier thanks to Covid-19 user advances in Zoom technology. There were quite a number of events (Chapter, Divisional, Branch and SIS) are being coordinated by Central Office to avoid duplication and conflicts. Central Office have done a wonderful job coordinating web events, including those directly relevant to us in Aotearoa New Zealand. Being a Trans-Tasman organisation, I find it interesting see how our colleagues tackle similar issues in a different policy and legislative framework.

#### Stepping Up

We produced editions of Stepping Up in September and December 2020 and in April 2021. This is a major milestone, as a considerable amount of work is required to produce each edition. Stepping Up sits well alongside the Insider. Thanks to Keith for this high-quality publication. Please do not hesitate to provide copy for inclusion and we would welcome your feedback on content. We don't currently have a 'letters to the editor' section but that should not stop you from writing in with your views.



### Branch Events

Branch events kicking off the 2020 year included a virtual symposium “Carbon Zero 2050” with keynote speaker Dr Rod Carr, Chair of the Climate Change Commission. A webinar on the new National Policy Statement on Freshwater management ( and the accompanying NES Regulations).

EIANZ members also joined our WasteMINZ colleagues in the WasteMINZ Interactive Workshop – Evidence-led contaminated land planning and management in October. This highlights the growing number of EIANZ members and Certified Practitioners working in land contamination.

In April 2021, members enjoyed an interesting presentation from Rebecca Jackson and Louis Brown from Otago Regional Council on the Waste Plan in relation to land use, air and water discharges, disturbance of contaminated sites. The Dunedin City Council also gave a presentation on the new Trade and Stormwater Bylaws.

May 2021 saw a “Where to with RMA” virtual seminar that was attended by branches and members across the motu. Thanks to Ian Boothroyd and Boffa Miskell for organising and hosting this event.

Many of us also tuned into the EIANZ Virtual Annual Conference, **Recovering from disaster** where over a seven-week period in October and November we profiled the environment profession and the Institute.

Thanks to our New Zealand branch coordinators for making events happen throughout the year:

- Bottom of the South - Chantal Whitby and Bernice (Berni) Chapman
- Christchurch - Annabelle Coates
- Top of the South - currently we don't have anyone in this position
- Wellington - Amanda O'Brien and Ailsa Robertson
- Palmerston North - Hamish Lowe and Colleen Sheldon
- Auckland - Ian Boothroyd and a keen group of members

### Students and Early Careers

The New Zealand Branch Mentoring Programme continued from 2020. It Programme is a powerful tool for students, early career professionals and those well into their chosen career field. The program runs annually within each Branch of the New Zealand EIANZ and participants are carefully paired with a respective mentor/mentee to gain maximum benefit.

The ‘Welcome Breakfast’ was held in several regions across the country in May. The event gave participants the chance to:

- Learn about the purposes and goals of the program from the program co-ordinator;
- Hear about the experiences of 2020 program participants and their suggestions on how to make the most out of mentoring relationships; and
- Meet their assigned mentor/mentee as well as other EIANZ members from across NZ who are also participating in the program.

Isobel Oldfield is also running the EIANZ pilot for the Steps programme; a training program for early career environmental professionals. The programme is designed to develop the skills and practical knowledge of those starting out in the environment profession



## Submissions

The EIANZ New Zealand Chapter lodged a comprehensive submission on the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.

Chapter President Dr Mark Bellingham commented that:

*“The Proposed NPS on Indigenous Biodiversity has been many years coming and we welcome it. EIANZ supports the NPS and most of what has been proposed. EIANZ have submitted some changes to the NPS policies to make it more effective. Of particular interest to EIANZ was the need for the NPS to formally recognise Accredited Ecologists, such as those certified by the Institute’s Certified Environmental Practitioner scheme. Currently many councils do not recognise accredited ecologists and the ecological advice they get suffers from a lack of professional standards – we seek to correct that through the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.”*

## Freshwater NPS

The National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management arrived in late 2020 and much of the key points in our chapter’s submission were adopted. But the devil is in the detail and some councils have been interpreting the NPS in “unexpected” ways. EIANZ provided additional advice to MfE on their guidance document, as to how the NPS and the NES regulations are to be interpreted. Thanks to Ian Boothroyd for bringing together a group of ecology practitioners across Aotearoa for this.

## Symposium

Our Chapter Annual Symposium – “Carbon Zero 2050” will be delivered online on two half days on the 23rd and 24th September. The event will comprise a series of speakers and an opportunity to interact in small workshops at the end of each day. This symposium is going address carbon emissions reductions through natural and other means, commencing with an address by Dr Rod Carr, the Chair of the Independent Climate Change Commission, followed by Dave Lowe who pioneered the measurement of atmospheric carbon in New Zealand and from 2003 to 2007, was one of the two New Zealand lead authors on the United Nations IPCC 4th assessment report on climate change working group.

## Membership

Aotearoa EIANZ membership has hovered around the 205-210 members for the past 3 years. Some of this churn comes from student members coming and going but filling the place of retiring members. We are still strongly represented in consultancies, but I believe under-represented in local and central government. It is pleasing to see some councils recommending CEnvP to staff, exposing them to EIANZ and our webinars and seminars.

Finally, thank you for being part of the Aotearoa New Zealand Chapter of EIANZ and for your support during a different year.

Mauri ora

Mark Bellingham

President New Zealand Chapter EIANZ  
20 August 2021