

Sustainability Appraisal In New Zealand

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Some History

EIA	EP & ED	1974	administrative mandate
?	RMA	1991	legislative mandate
SIA		2003	legislative (narrow) mandate
HIA		2004	administrative mandate
SEA	..		

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Planning and assessment frameworks

- Preference for avoiding legal requirements for impact assessment
- Where present, legal requirements are narrow or relatively weak

But

- Tradition of 'enabling' planning legislation which gives scope, especially Local Government Act 2002

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RMA plays better on paper than on the ground

Potentially a strong platform for strategic assessment

However it needs all elements in place early, ie National Policy Statements, National Environmental Standards, Regional and District Plans - this did not happen

Critically its weak cumulative effects provisions and absent clear precautionary principle provisions, leaves it not 'fit for purpose'

Remember also only project level application to central government activities

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Sustainable development

Sustainable Development Programme of Action 2003 led by Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Four demonstration projects to trial integrated policy development:

- Quality and Allocation of Freshwater
- Energy
- Sustainable Cities
- Investment in Child and Youth Development

Fifth workstream on measuring progress shows interest in assessment activities

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Political Climate 1999 - 2008

Labour government with Manifesto references to sustainability and sustainable development.

Integrated sustainability framework emerges

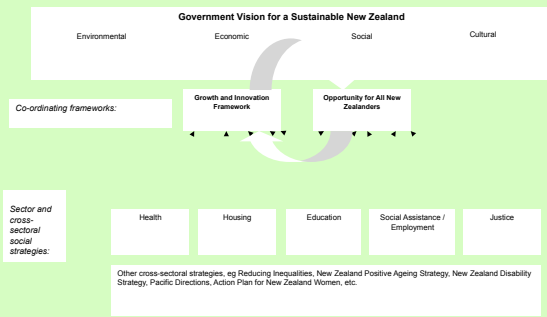
- The Growth and Innovation Framework (2002)
- Sustainable Development for New Zealand - Programme of Action (2003)
- Opportunities for all New Zealanders (2004)

and

Local Government Act 2002 promotes "a sustainable development approach"

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From Opportunity for All New Zealanders, p12 (on-line version)

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Strategic Assessment

For around 2005 semi-regional urban central planning commenced, empowered by LGA to 'fill the spatial planning gap' left by the RMA. Examples:

- Urban Development Strategy (UDS) in Christchurch
- Smart&Growth in Tauranga

These planning activities have incorporated formal and informal assessment activities

UDS used HIA which led to development of HPSTED - "Health Promotion and Sustainability Through Environmental Design: A guide for Planning 2008"

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A Bit of a Summary

RMA encourages integrated planning for sustainable management at local and regional level, and allocation of resources subject to narrow assessment process. Emphasis on natural environment

Central government works towards integrated policy development under the banner of Sustainable New Zealand - climate change package and social policy package without strong connections. No assessment activities evident

LGA facilitates regional and district spatial planning with local 'brands' incorporating some formal and informal assessment activities

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Specific Sustainability Assessment Outputs Include

From FRST Contract "Building Capacity for Sustainable Development: the Enabling Research" - October 2003-September 2009, Landcare Research

- Sustainability Assessment Model (SAM) adaption and use of UK monetisation approach in New Zealand
- Development of "Framework Approach for Sustainability Appraisal in New Zealand" (Sadler and Ward)

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Political Climate 2008 - ?

Don't mention the "S" word

Science funding for sustainability activities cease

Policy development for sustainability activities cease

These activities labeled "low quality expenditure"

Government focus on balanced development - economic development with environmental responsibility

But

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Sustainability Appraisal maintains a strong toe hold

- formally applied to Canterbury Water Management Strategy
 - promoted through Ministry for the Environment Quality Planning website
 - initial exploration of application to large corporates
- and
- Statistics New Zealand's Framework for Measuring Sustainable Development (2009) establishes the capital approach and a 'moderate' level sustainability as official analytical model and benchmark for assessment activities

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