

The Planning Context for Impact Assessment: An application for Health

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Introduction

- Health underpinned early rationale for planning
- Challenges of 1980s narrowed scope of planning
- Emerging opportunities for planning and health
- Three Planning Acts & RMA note health
- IA a key tool in RMA
- Health high on international agenda
- But not prominent in local planning agendas



Reasons for poor integration

- Development of separate mandates
- No strategic planning overview to co-ordinate across sectors
- Policy gaps in environmental management



Impact Assessment at Strategic and Policy Levels

- IA provided for in RMAct
- No requirement for environmental assessment of government policies outside RMA
- SEA/PEA important policy tools
- Note increasing planning activity outside RMA



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

“a strategic form of EIA that is intended to identify and assess the likely significant effects of a policy, plan or programme on the environment, the results of which are then taken into account in the decision-making process”
(Sheate et al., 2001).



SEA is an appraisal of the environmental impacts of a policy which is used in decision-making.

(Therivel, 1997)



- System is much less integrated and more ad hoc than purported
- SEA/policy assessment occurring formally and informally in and outside of statutory contexts (e.g. Auckland Regional Growth Strategy)
- Quality is highly variable
- Little active promotion at national level

Zoning & urban intensification

- Zoning traditionally important in managing environmental effects
- Need some caution about mixed uses
- Major issues in respect of intensification
- Must not compromise health in achieving urban growth



















New Council Plans

- New long term council community plans
- Evaluation of community outcomes
- Good opportunities to embed health issues
- Need to ensure that links made across plans prepared under different mandates (eg RMA and LGA)



National and Regional Initiatives

- A National Policy Statement for Health?
- Outcome of Sustainable Development Action Plan-sustainable cities
- 'Review of Centre' and 'Whole of Government'
- Regional initiatives eg WCC and MCC



An agenda for Health

- A need for a national urban research agenda
- stronger co-ordination of policy-making within and across levels of government between health and other sectors
- Closer integration of health and planning within councils
- Sharing of information and data between agencies
- Development of a co-ordinated strategy for LGAct, proposed legislation (eg Health and Building Bills), and new plans



Conclusion

- Policy making will become more inclusive- eg recognition of urban form and health
- Collaboration will require new levels of commitment and interdisciplinary endeavour
- Attention to health issues at policy levels across sectors and inclusion within plans should contribute to more sustainable living environments

