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Joined the Institute in 1987

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Environment Institute  
of Australia and  
New Zealand Inc.

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

In 1987, there was no internet, no email communications, no Skype, and long-distance phone calls were extremely expensive. In fact, it was 1988 before staff in our Government department were given desktop computers, and were expected to start using them. So it was considerably more difficult than now to know what was happening outside of one's immediate workplace, and it was very easy to not know what it was one should know to be competent. Being part of a relevant professional organisation such as EIANZ, and attending EIANZ seminars, meetings and national conferences was an excellent way to find out what work was happening elsewhere, meet new colleagues, and meet existing colleagues from interstate and overseas in real life. EIANZ functions were always good value, and usually very enlightening – both with respect to whatever I was working on at the time and also with respect to areas outside of my particular job requirements.

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

I have been incredibly fortunate to have worked with many outstanding mentors and with many excellent colleagues throughout my career in Australia and New Zealand, starting with academic field ecological research, then moving on to applied environmental impact studies, pollution assessment, pollution control, contaminated sites cleanups, environmental prosecutions, development of new waste avoidance and resource recovery legislation, and then general commercial consulting. Some of my outstanding mentors were Professor HG (Andy) Andrewartha (University of Adelaide), Dr Robert Carrick (CSIRO), Prof. WC (Wally) Clark (Uni. of Canterbury, NZ), Prof. Helene Marsh (James Cook Uni.), Dr RG (Graham) Chittleborough (WA DCE), Dr Barry Carbon (WA Department of Environment and WA EPA) and Dr Bernard Bowen (WA EPA). Each of these people was or is a brilliant, inspiring, hugely accomplished scientist, was/is a fine example of the highest professional ethics and propriety, and who was/is generously prepared to give others (including me) their time and the benefit of their wisdom and experience. I really appreciated their guidance, support, and their examples of outstanding professional behaviour, and I still do.

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

The greatest achievements in my career have all required much

dedication to the project, persistence, stress and so much plain hard work. But we also had a lot of fun along the way. Completing excellent work based on solid science is always a satisfying achievement, and seeing it through to publication is another reward in itself.

Communicating the outcomes and benefits of the research to politicians and to the public takes time and effort, but in our areas of expertise it is essential, both for the sake of contributing to protecting our planet and for encouraging ongoing funding for science generally.

Be sure to be very aware of your partner and family, and make sure you also give them proper consideration and sufficient quality time.

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

EIANZ is the peak body in Australia and New Zealand representing scientific professionals across all areas of environmental research and activity. As such, statements and representations from EIANZ quite rightly carry much more weight with politicians and the media than representations from the majority of we individual environmental professionals. Being the recognised national voice for and of environmental professionals is a major achievement.

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

It is an excellent way to keep in touch with a wide range of environmental professionals with whom, otherwise, I would not come into contact. Also, EIANZ regularly provides the opportunities for me to see and listen to the excellent work being done by young early career professionals, which often is work and using techniques that we could not have even imagined a few decades ago.

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

Most of you would be working in environmental areas, and have joined EIANZ because you are interested and concerned about 'the environment'. A huge range of opportunities will come your way during your career. Choose some areas where you can make a positive difference and then apply yourself to those with dedication and persistence, and aim to produce excellent work. Being an active part of EIANZ committees is one way to meet new colleagues and to be part of shaping the future.