



ZENA HELMAN FEIANZ
DIRECTOR | HELMAN
ENVIRONMENTAL

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?

The Institute was a worthy, delightful, disparate collection of dedicated environmental professionals desperately trying to define our emerging profession. It ran on the smell of an oily rag, and on the good will of the early Council members. As one of the very early graduates with a dedicated environment science degree (M Env Sc from Monash) I had been involved with other environmental professional activities, such as the first environmental students' conference. I was keen to define our profession, and see it recognised. The EIA (as it then was) was the perfect vehicle for this.

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

The technical answers to environmental issues may be complex, but these are the relatively easy part of the environmental challenge. The hard part is getting governments, organisations and individuals to change their behaviour. The change process requires real multi- and inter-disciplinary work. It can be too easy for governments and organisations to tick-and-flick without looking deeply at how environmental, social, and economic issues interact.

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

Gaining recognition for the profession is undoubtedly the most important achievement. This is a slow process, but the CEnvP program is making headway. Environmental advice must be

credible, and the key part of this is having advice from credible professional sources. Linked to this is the Institute having a credible voice in public environmental debates.

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

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

Get involved! Have your say on issues affecting both the profession, and the wider environmental debates. Join your local Division. Attend events – and organise your own. Play a role in shaping the debates. Call on other members for advice. As environmental professional we know how much everything is connected to everything else – this is as true for the Institute as it is for the environment.

Celebrating
30
years
1987 - 2017