

Big ideas

at the Annual EIANZ conference

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Well- the last flights have flown, the wine supplies are recovering, and that strange droning noise won't be back in Adelaide 'til at least next year. For those of you that missed out, here are some of the most interesting moments and ideas that came out of this year's conference. Enjoy!

Bringing about change in the workplace

Many young professionals reading this may have felt the urge- or even tried- to bring about behaviour changes to make their organization more environmentally friendly. Very often, this process is fairly ad-hoc; one might talk to colleagues and managers, or perhaps put up a sign or two. It may come as a surprise that there's a name for people who do this: change agents. Will Symons (Maunsell Australia) presented a paper at the conference that discusses some key requirements for anyone looking to be a change agent in their organization. If you're looking to influence your organisation's behaviour, do have a look at his paper- or just google 'change agent' for methods and case studies.

Public benchmarking of environmental performance

Ask the average aussie what state of the environment reporting is, and you're likely to get a confused look, or at most, a vague answer. This, according to keynote speaker Jeff Tryens, is not the case in Oregon. If he is to be believed, the average Oregonian knows a fair bit more on how his or her state is progressing toward sustainability. This is because the local media eagerly covers the state's sustainability indicators.

Imagine opening the paper on a Sunday and, instead of glancing over lists of stocks and shares or the racing results, one could sprinkle their toast crumbs on sustainability benchmarks... exciting, but what would the politicians think?

Incentives for compliance in alliances

If you're a consultant, you might, at some point, have wondered how to get your clients to opt for best practice instead of compliance. While you weighed up the pros and cons of blackmail, you probably overlooked the possibility of different contractual arrangements.

Matthew Weller and Monique Chelin (GHD) showed that alliancing- an arrangement where designers, contractors and the client are all part of one project team- can give superior environmental outcomes in major infrastructure projects. When everyone's in the same boat, and financial benefits for environmental performance have been

written into the contract, it's a lot easier to achieve environmental excellence. While Matt and Monique focus on alliancing in infrastructure projects, you might find that you can use these ideas in your field too.

'Environmental practice is not up to scratch yet'

... or at least, EIANZ president Bill Haylock doesn't think so. Our fledgling industry does have a way to go, and EIANZ has a big role to play in bringing it to a point of genuine maturity and credibility. It's early days yet, but keep an eye on institute activity in coming months, particularly in areas like professional development and certification. If everything goes right, the first question people ask will one day be 'how do I get in?' - a welcome substitute for the current one: 'what's in it for me?'. .