**Session number and name:** CS4.6 Beyond impact assessment: The integration of social concepts in organizational decision-making

**Day:** Thursday  
**Date:** 8th May 2008  
**Time:** 8.30-10.30am  
**Persons attending session:** Approx 20

**Name(s) of Session Chair(s)**  
Dr Sheridan Coakes (Coakes Consulting – Social Impact and Community Consultants)  
Dr Geoff Syme (CSIRO)

**Contributors**  
Anthony DiNicola (Chevron)  
Scott Phillips (Futureye)  
Tanya Burdett/Alex White (Dept of Communities and Local Govt/Scott Wilson)  
Mette Fredsguard (Ben Cave and Associates)  
Maria Valenzuela-Varela (University of Guadalajara)

**Panel Contributors:**  
Dr Jaquie Tracey (Dept of Environment and Climate Change, NSW)  
Dr James Baines (Taylor Baines and Associates)

(a) **Three current issues in application of assessment processes discussed in this session**  
- Utilisation of company case studies, greater engagement of company personnel in the process, involvement of internal champions  
- Development of appropriate systems, tools, protocols for impact practice – need for an applied, strategic and relevant focus  
- Development of appropriate capacity (both internal and external)  
- Understanding the organizational culture (internal understanding, awareness and capacity) in which the assessment is being undertaken – company capacity to embrace ESIA

(i) **One or more emerging trends**  
- Alignment of policies/programs across governance levels  
- Need to be more strategic – what information is required by decision makers (strategic SEIA)

I **Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:**

(i) **dimensions of IA effectiveness (i.e. what are the characteristics of effective IA?)**  
- Building strong internal and external networks and capacity  
- Using existing case studies to improve understanding  
- Pragmatic development of useful tools, processes, procedures, protocols

(ii) **challenges/barriers to IA effectiveness**  
- Education and awareness of SEIA practice – examples need to be provided  
- Making the assessment process relevant to decision makers

(iii) **how these barriers might be overcome**  
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of processes and assessment programs

(d) **Comments on the Art and Science of Impact Assessment (i.e. the relative importance and interplay between science and values/politics/subjctivity in impact assessment)**  
Need for a compromise of Art and Science (experience/creativity/application/rigour)