Evaluating HIA in the Hawke’s Bay: lessons from the field

Louise Signal & Velma McClellan

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Paper aims:
1. Describe HIAs & evaluations
2. Reflect on HIA & evaluation
Broader Context

**Parameters**
- Decision-making processes
- Decision-makers
- Type of HIA

**Inputs**
- Proposal
- Capacity and experience
- Resources
- Time
- Organisational arrangements

**Process**
- Procedural fidelity
- Involvement of decision-makers and stakeholders
- Transparency
- Trade-offs
- Review

**Proximal Impacts**
- Informing decisions
- Changing decisions and implementation
- Changes in health determinants
- Predictive efficacy
- Achieving goals

**Distal Impacts**
- Understanding
- Participatory learning
- Influencing other activities
- Engagement
- Perception of HIA

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Values, Purpose and Goals

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http://www.hiaconnect.edu.au/evaluating_hia.htm
Broader context

- NZ HIA Guides
- Growing support/practice of HIA in NZ
- HIA Support Unit in Ministry of Health
- Funding available for “Learning by Doing”
- Training available – Rob, Louise etc
- Ana and Maree met on training and became colleagues at Hawke’s Bay District Health Board (DHB)
- Maree/Ana applied for funding with Rob as mentor and me as evaluator
Parameters

Five HIAs evaluation

• For 3 councils, 1 for DHB

• Topics – Flaxmere Urban Design, graffiti vandalism, oral health, waste management, air quality

• Plans, strategies, framework

• Process & impact evaluation (except air change which only impact)

• Timeframe – over two years
Methodology
Evaluation Objectives

Process objectives

• What process was undertaken?
• The strengths of, constraints on, improvements to, the HIA process?
• The resources used?

Impact objectives

• Were the objectives of the HIA met?
• Impact on the Strategy/Framework/Plan?
• If HIA added value to the planning process. How?
Overall Evaluation Objectives

• Key factors that achieved buy-in to the HIA process and outcomes, esp. at senior management & political level?

• What resources could be developed for use in future HIAs & evaluations?

• The key lessons from HIAs
Theoretical underpinnings

1. Evaluation frameworks from NZ HIA Guides
2. Health Promotion Programme Evaluation
3. Action research
Methods

1. Participant observation – attended scoping/appraisal workshops, team meetings sometimes by phone, debriefs

• Pros – established relationships with team/ key stakeholders, acted as critical friend asking reflective questions at team meetings, demonstrated how to undertake an evaluation (learning by doing), assist with clarifying work at each stage i.e. HIA objectives

• Cons – possibly too close & biased but two of us, took time but hugely valuable
Methods

2. Documentary analysis – minutes of meetings, workshop reports, evaluations of workshops, data used, literature review analysed, HIA report reviewed, Council/DHB decisions

• Pros – can provide good/tangible data, can be readily available

• Cons – important that it is gathered, not full story
Methods

3. Key informant interviews – range of perspectives: HIA team, key stakeholders, insiders and outsiders, - used versions of interview schedule

• Pros – range reduces bias, by phone
• Cons – time, money so had to be very selective
Results of evaluations - process

- Good process that improved as HIAs progressed “seamless”
- It may not be your timetable “the first was last”
- Needed to be savvy to get good participation “warm contacts”
- Struggled to keep track of time it took
- Relations strengthened between partners & made future HIAs even easier

Process “opened each other’s eyes as to how each of us works, & how we go about our decision-making”
Results of evaluations - impacts

• HIA objectives meet
• Positive impact on plans - all but two recommendations were accepted
• Added value to planning process – strong evidence base, likely stronger policy for health wellbeing & equity, stronger community support
• Strengthened democracy (waste management)
• Buy-in from key stakeholders for HIA
Lessons about HIA

- Importance of legislative requirement (wellbeings in Local Govt. Act)
- Chose winners to start
- Importance of working with partner agency and establishing relations e.g. report peer reviewed for: accuracy, appropriate language, that recommendations that are fit for purpose
Lessons about evaluation

- Need to be flexible – not your timeframes
- Improve process as it progresses
- Interrogate the entire process
- Action research approach enables input along way
- Easy to evaluate best practice – values
- Easy to evaluate a team that wants to be evaluated – integral part of the process
- Evaluate – even on a shoestring
Further work

- Outcome evaluations of HIAs
- Review of all NZ evaluations
- Better methods for tracking time
- Focus on unintended impacts
- Stronger focus on HIA values - equity, honouring Treaty of Waitangi