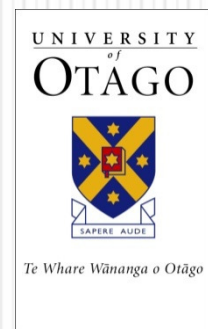


# Knowing where we are going

## Doing purposeful HIA

**Ruth Cunningham**  
**University of Otago**



## purpose in HIA

- Agreement among participants on what the HIA is aiming to achieve
- At the beginning
- Preferably documented
- Seems obvious,  
but not always something we do well
- May have more than one purpose,  
but let's be clear about that

# why does purpose matter?

- HIA can serve many purposes  
(so its not always obvious what the purpose is)
- Different participants can have different views as to the purpose of an HIA
- Lack of clear purpose makes it:
  - Hard to achieve your purpose (not all working in the same direction)
  - Hard to know if you've achieved what you set out to (evaluation)

# a typology of HIA (Harris-Roxas and Harris 2010)

- Mandated
- Decision support
- Advocacy
- Community led

# mandated HIA

- No legal requirement for HIA in NZ
- But some avenues to semi-mandated HIA – e.g. in the transport sector
- Can occur as part of an EIA or IIA
- Where truly mandated set procedure and expected form of outcomes
- Semi-mandated – can be much less clear what is expected

## mandated (semi) example

- An HIA on a Regional Land Transport Strategy
- Initiated by local govt
- Led by a consultancy
- Lack of clarity about status of recommendations
- Health and transport (primarily economic) goals seen to be in conflict
- Eventual incorporation of recommendations, but little acknowledgement of value of HIA
- Perhaps clearer expectations at the outset would have helped

## decision support HIA

- Much more common in NZ (most HIA)
- Involvement of policy proponents/ policy makers
- Timeliness crucial

# decision support HIA example

- A central govt policy HIA
- Supporting central govt policy makers, across agencies
- University conceived and led
- Funded as decision support (central govt funding)
- Lack of engagement with policy makers
- Many participants were also acting as advocates (for health and equity)
- Not acceptable as advocacy (to funder), not acceptable as decision support (to decision makers)



# advocacy HIA

- Also common in NZ
- Public health initiated HIA often have a strong advocacy flavour
- However often not explicit – can be framed as decision support for some participants and advocacy/ values driven for others

# advocacy HIA example

- Water scheme HIA – submission to Environment Court
- DHB/PHU driven
- Bringing a health perspective to statutory process
- Could also be seen as decision support or even mandated...
- Controversy about status of report/recommendations
- Need for communications plan identified – media impt. for advocacy

# community led HIA

- Sometimes regarded as the “ideal” but rarely truly community led
- However a number of examples of very strong community involvement in the HIA process
- Whanau Ora HIA tool specifically designed to be community driven/led

# community led HIA example

- HIA on air quality and heating policy
- DHB and local govt initiated, but very strong community involvement
- Clear that aim was community input into council decision (air quality policy)
- Primacy of community views
- Success partly down to clear purpose

## how can we do more purposeful HIA?

- Awareness of the range of possible purposes
- Discussion and agreement on purpose  
at the outset
- Clear expectations about final outputs

# reflections

- Should we be regarding advocacy HIA as more of an option?
- If so, who will fund advocacy HIA?
- Tensions between funders expectations and practitioners values and aims
- Be explicit about our values

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