

# NZPI FELLOW MEMBERSHIP

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## Ken Gimblett

AWARDED ON 22 MARCH 2024

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Ken Gimblett has contributed significantly to the status and advancement of planning practice in New Zealand over thirty-plus years and is recognised as a leader in the profession.

Graduating from Massey University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Regional Planning (Hons), Ken first worked as an Assistant Planner with New Plymouth District Council and gained overseas experience as a Planner for Bath City Council in the United Kingdom.

Returning to New Zealand in 1993, Ken spent five years as a Senior Planner in the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit of Christchurch City Council before joining Boffa Miskell in 1998. Ken became a full partner at Boffa Miskell in 2008.

Over the past three decades, Ken has prepared numerous resource consent and plan change applications and their associated assessments of environmental effects; and provided advice to government departments and agencies. This experience includes projects and policies with high levels of public and legal scrutiny.

### Planning Practice and Leadership

Ken regularly acts as principal planning lead and/or project director, managing specialist input from multiple disciplines across a diverse range of organisations. He has performed this role on modest projects comprising four to six discipline inputs, through to international based-consortia projects involving more than 12-15 specialist fields of input.

Ken has managed teams of 30+ people on projects ranging from <NZ\$10M to NZ\$10-20B. This has included technical and strategic planning, steering committee, and specialist advisory management responsibilities.

Through guiding clients and experts through complicated processes in relation to long-term, large-scale and complex development, infrastructure, energy and utility proposals, Ken has contributed to planning practice and demonstrated leadership in planning.

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Notable projects include:

Dunedin Hospital (Current) Lead planning advisor for the Ministry of Health, providing strategic planning advice to the project, managing and preparing the necessary planning applications and assessment, and securing related approvals. This has involved successfully securing staged consents utilising the COVID Fast-Track legislation under the direction of the EPAs.

Lake Onslow Pumped Hydro Option: Feasibility Analysis (2021 – 2022) Leadership of the environmental investigation and consenting workstreams as part of an international consortia advising MBIE on the project feasibility. Management of multiple specialist technical investigations and reporting, engaging in risk appraisal and providing strategic consenting advice to the New Zealand government.

Holcim NZ Ltd, Oamaru (2005-2011) Ken led the multiple consent application preparation, AEE evaluation and reporting for a new cement manufacturing plant and associated raw materials quarries, including an associated Notice of Requirement for reinstatement of the Waiareka-Weston branch rail line. This was a substantial industrial plant and associated resource extraction project, in a regional location with natural and cultural sensitivities. There was a significant social and economic component to the project and the assessment of its effects. Community engagement skills and a strong resource management understanding were critical to the successful consenting of this project.

Community, Social and Recreation Effects Assessments – Project Aqua (2002-2004). Ken undertook public consultation with community and recreation groups, Tangata Whenua, territorial authorities and statutory agencies and prepared reports assessing environmental effects in terms of social impacts, community and recreation values of Meridian Energy's \$1.2B hydro-electricity proposals for the lower Waitaki Valley.

Most notably, in the aftermath of the Christchurch Earthquakes, Ken's leadership was critical in setting a regulatory framework to deliver the Blueprint and wider recovery outcomes. Working with and alongside the "Blueprint 100" consortia, Ken was engaged by CERA to assist in preparing a comprehensive package of planning provisions for the central city area within the 100-day timeframe, under the direction of the Minister of Earthquake Recovery to amend the Christchurch District Plan to implement the Christchurch Central and Land Use Recovery Plans.

At the same time, Ken contributed planning advice and expertise into development of the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan and the Christchurch Central Development Unit for the Minister for Earthquake Recovery in respect to Central City residential, business and mixed-use environments.

Ken was appointed to the Joint Management Board (in partnership with Christchurch City Council and Ngai Tahu) to determine matters under urban design and outline development plan related rules now contained within the Christchurch District (City) Plan. Ken chaired the JMB on the majority of central city redevelopment and recovery proposals from 2012 until it was disestablished.

Ken prepared the consent applications and related documentation for the earliest 'Anchor Projects', including the Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct and the Christchurch Hospital Redevelopment - Acute Services Building.

Ken's extensive knowledge of the historical planning framework in Christchurch and his experience working within the bespoke post-earthquake legislative context is unparalleled.

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### Statutory Planning and Policy Analysis and Preparation

Ken consistently demonstrates strong technical knowledge and understanding of key legislation, and is skilled in leading and facilitating a collaborative decision-making process. He has a proven ability to understand varying perspectives, assimilate and communicate complex and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, and articulate and write succinct, lawful policies.

Practitioner Drafting Group, National Planning Standards (2017 – 2021): Appointed to provide advice and review services on draft National Planning Standards for the Ministry for the Environment.

Mackenzie Basin Gap Analysis for Environment Canterbury (2018-2019); a review of a series of statutory and non-statutory documents related to the management of the Mackenzie Basin to ascertain the extent of alignment in relation to four key themes: landscape, biodiversity, water quantity and land use change.

### Hearing Commissioner

As an accredited RMA decision-maker since 2005, Ken regularly acts as an independent Hearing Commissioner, and as an expert planning witness before Council hearings and the Environment Court. As Hearing Commissioner, Ken has considered a wide range of proposals, including business parks and recreational airports, residential and commercial developments, leisure and recreation proposals and Three Waters infrastructure.

He has acted principally as a sole commissioner in the Canterbury region for several district and regional councils in relation to resource consent hearings, change of conditions and plan change proposals. Ken has also acted to determine issues of notification and section 128 RMA reviews. The majority of his commissioner roles have been as a sole decision maker, but he has also acted on hearing panels comprised of both elected and technical specialist panel members, often in the capacity as Chair.

Several of the hearings Ken has acted as decision-maker on have included submissions numbering in excess of 50, and in some cases over 100.

He is a provider of planning advisory services and commissioner to a range of public and private organisations including Meridian Energy, Oceana Gold, Housing New Zealand, Department of Corrections, Health NZ, Environment Canterbury, CERA/CCDU (now disestablished) and Christchurch City Council.

Mediation: He has assisted in the resolution of planning disputes, both through Environment Court processes and through more informal dispute resolution forums. In this role Ken has chaired pre-hearing meetings for resource consent applications, expert conferencing and other resource management mediation.

### Mentoring and Leadership

RMA Decision Making Accreditation Training: One of Ken's most significant contributions to the planning profession has been as a South Island presenter of the Resource Management Making Good Decisions Accreditation Course administered by the Ministry for the Environment since its inception in 2005.

Since inception of the programme, Ken has acted as a presenter in both the foundation and recertification courses. In this capacity Ken has had a direct role in the training and development of appointed decision-makers under the RMA, including commissioners (elected and not).

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CPD Training Courses: Ken has presented at numerous NZPI, MfE and LGNZ professional training workshops, including those relating to professional reporting by expert witnesses, plan administration and legislative reform.

Professional Associations: Ken is a full and active member of the New Zealand Planning Institute (since 1994), the Resource Management Law Association (1994) and the Institute of Directors.

### Summary

Ken Gimblett exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding planner through providing strategic advice for complex, unique and challenging projects. Of particular note was his valuable contribution of planning expertise during the Christchurch post-earthquake recovery work.

As lead planner on many of the larger, nationally important infrastructure projects, Ken demonstrates strongly collaborative and trust-based leadership, and a highly effective approach to developing relationships with clients, communities, stakeholders and decision-makers. He consistently offers high standards of advice leading to case law and guidance.

Ken has natural affinity and proven abilities to engage with diverse organisations to develop integrated results that enable flexible and creative environmental solutions. He is an industry leader in statutory and environmental planning, effects assessment, policy analysis, plan preparation and administration, and public consultation.

His 18 years' involvement with the RMA 'Making Good Decisions' programme has seen him directly advise and mentor councillors, community board members, and resource management professionals across the South Island.