

Activities of Toronto Area Program Committee

OAIA's Toronto Program Committee has continued its ongoing practice of delivering topical seminars to EA professionals in Southern Ontario. In the past year or so, the Committee was pleased to host three seminars on diverse topics related to impact assessment practice - proposed changes to the federal environmental assessment process, assessment electricity restructuring and potential climate change impacts. As well, the Committee co-hosted a Holiday Social in December, 2000 with the Ontario Association for Environmental Management (OSEM).

Immediately following OAIA's Annual General Meeting in April, 2001 (at the University of Toronto's Faculty Club), a diverse crowd of 35 members and friends received an overview of current issues in the federal environmental assessment process from Louise Knox, Ontario Regional Director for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. Louise's presentation provided an excellent overview of potential changes to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* as a result of the federal government's five-year review process, and allowed practitioners to raise questions about how impact assessment practice may be affected in the future.

Our October, 2000 seminar at the Elephant and Castle Pub focused on the work of Chuck Southam and his colleagues related to assessing the impacts of potential climate change on urban watersheds. Chuck is a Water Resources Engineer from Environment Canada-Ontario Region's Water Issues Division. He enthusiastically presented a summary of assessment work performed in the Grand River watershed area that reveals the impact of decreased water supplies on urban watersheds. These impacts have implications for water policy adaptation, planning and management.

Our June, 2000 electricity restructuring seminar at the WineYard was held during the government's public comment period to enhance our members' and friends' ability to comment on the proposed requirements for electricity facilities under the Environmental Assessment Act. Our 3 speakers: Elaine Hardy, Program Support Coordinator at the Ministry of Environment's Environmental Assessment Branch; Murray Paterson, Green Energy Manager at Ontario Power Generation; and Jake Brooks, Executive Director of the Independent Power Association of Ontario provided a great summary of the proposed new regime and its potential implications for impact assessment practitioners.