

CONCLUSION

Change in any sphere is always difficult but, despite the less than fortuitous circumstances, there was surprising good will and a positive air in October 1991. Nevertheless, there was an awareness that the new act was problematic and that there was a major task ahead in educating users of the planning system on how to use it. There were also significant challenges, not least the expectations that the new act created about the environmental outcomes it would achieve. Since the act's inception it has been subject to a dizzying number of amendments that have, over time, reduced the internal coherence of the act. Equally, the existence of the Environment Court, although providing a rigorous and above all neutral forum for the resolution of appeals, also generates a huge amount of case law, which in turn affects the everyday practice of planning. The last nineteen years have proved that the challenges of introducing legislation that takes a new direction should not be underestimated and that making sustainable management the cornerstone of that system is controversial, particularly for those who use the system.