



The Policy Project:  
Responsive today,  
shaping tomorrow

# The Policy Project

Tier 2 Policy Leaders Network

Conversation Tracker

23 October 2014



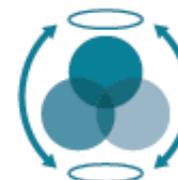
# Our Intent

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Our intent is to collectively improve our policy advice, capability and performance across the system.

This was our fifth working session. We:

- Shared “what’s on top” - our pressure points and successes
- Engaged with Andrew Kibblewhite, Head of the Policy Profession, on our expectations of him and him of us
- Briefly shared how we are establishing or re-establishing relationships with our Ministers – the “demand side”
- Heard insights from and networked with our future policy leaders at the closing session of the Analysts Forum.



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## Workshop participants

Andrew Kibblewhite  
Head of the Policy Profession  
**Department of the Prime  
Minister and Cabinet**

Helen Wyn  
**Department of the Prime  
Minister and Cabinet**

Guy Beatson  
**Ministry for the  
Environment**

Andrea Schollmann  
**Ministry of Education**

Frank McLaughlin  
**Ministry of Justice**

Andrew Jackson  
**Ministry of Transport**

Deborah Roche  
**Ministry for Primary Industries**

Tony Lynch  
**Ministry of Defence**

Katherine Baxter  
**Ministry of Culture and  
Heritage**

Don Gray  
**Ministry of Health**

Clare Ward  
**Families Commission**

Paul James  
**Department of Internal Affairs**

Michael Papesch  
**Department of Customs**

Su’a Kevin Thomsen  
**Ministry of Pacific Island  
Affairs**

Andrea McDonald  
**LINZ**

Jane Frances  
**The Treasury**

Struan Little  
**Department of Inland Revenue**

Jo Field  
**Department of Corrections**

Kevin Guerin  
**Ministry for the  
Environment**

Sally Washington  
**Department of the Prime  
Minister and Cabinet**

# What's on top

## What's keeping me awake?

Establishing relationships with Ministers

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Getting a new Minister up to speed               | New Minister who may not have wanted the portfolio                       |
| Translating BIM into Ministerial work programmes | Options for getting advice to groups of Ministers not single agency lens |

Capability

|                                   |  |   |             |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Minister's desire for better data | Building policy capability – include in 4yr plan | Resources/ prioritisation - stress on staff | Recruitment | Juggling balls & not dropping any |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|

Key challenges

|           |              |                         |               |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Auckland! | ICT projects | Business transformation | Child poverty |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|



## What I'm feeling good about...

Establishing relationships with Ministers

|  |   |
|--|---|
| BIM process-proactive and front-footed   | New Minister with lots of enthusiasm            |
| Opportunity to establish credibility with new Minister who respects Public Service | New Ministers – chance to refresh is energising |
|  | Open engagement with new Ministers              |

Progress in meeting challenges

|               |  |   |
|---------------|--|---|
| Child poverty | The Policy Project – building momentum | aPAD – revamp as a system resource                      |
|               | People doing a great job!              | PAF – imminent launch of the Pacific analysis framework |

# Policy Project – a message from our Sponsor

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Andrew Kibblewhite shared his “what’s on top”, outlined how he saw his role as Head of the Policy Profession and sought feedback on the group’s expectations of him. Key messages:

## The Policy Project

- Thanks to this Tier 2 group for getting behind the work
- Chief executives are enthusiastic about the Policy Project, evidenced in the resources they are committing to the work
- Opportunity to bring something new, fresh and innovative to the policy process including bringing in voices and input - “depth and spark” - from outside the Public Service
- At our best the policy community gets stuff done, practically and with good quality advice. At our worst we can be “ad-hoc and miss the mark”
- This project should “accentuate the positive”
- If we don’t perform, Ministers will look elsewhere— policy is a contestable service
- Ministers are looking for improvement from us – this is both a challenge and a huge opportunity.

## The Head of Profession role

- The State Sector Reform Leadership Group felt the role was so important it needed to be held at chief executive level
- As a CE I can galvanise support from other CEs, legitimise, encourage and champion the work across the system
- A statement from the HoP can set expectations and standards and “name truths” eg. what does free and frank advice look like?
- I have a “personal passion for policy”
- Don’t intend to “get in the way” of the Tier 2 Leaders Network, instead want to hear from Policy Leaders about what I can do “that will be helpful” to you.



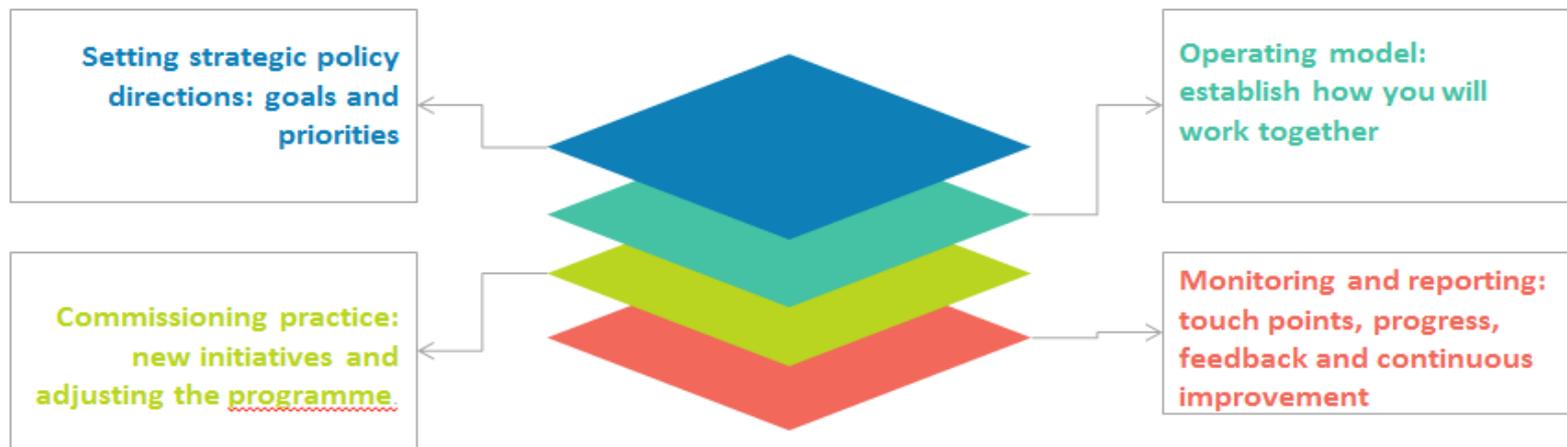
## Tier 2 ideas, challenges, suggestions...the HoP can:

- Build capacity to support robust debate on sensitive and challenging policy issues – including medium and longer term issues, how the public might be involved in debate, and how the debate is reframed to enable discussion eg. in security discussions, talk about what we want to ‘protect’ not about ‘threats’ and ‘risks’
- Demystify policy and ensure it is grounded and practical
- “Hold our feet to the fire” – ensure we deliver (performance targets?)
- Facilitate and broker between us – emphasise the ‘expectation’ for us to work together (include in DCE performance expectations?)
- Link up the academic community and public debate to bring new ideas and to ensure we don’t get locked in policy paradigms (that reduce challenge and debate)
- Help build our collective relationships with our key customers (Ministers)
- Champion the importance of good policy with chief executives (some of whom don’t understand or value policy).

# Our discussion topic – background material...

## The demand side: ensuring Ministers demand and receive great policy services...

*Ministers and policy advisors are both motivated by wanting the best for New Zealand and New Zealanders. The key to effective decision making is good working relationships between Ministers and officials - ensuring that Ministers communicate to officials what they want to achieve, and officials are enabled to help Ministers reach their goals. How might we **identify and share successful models, strategies and tools** for developing excellent relationships between Ministers and their chief executives and policy advisors?*



In the post election environment how are we going about **establishing the foundations for great policy services**? How are we framing the conversations to:

- set strategic policy frameworks and priorities?
- promote early and regular engagement in policy design and development?
- balance responsiveness to issues facing the current Minister against investment in long term policy stewardship?
- agree ways of working that facilitate free, frank, and robust discussion, encourage good practice and identify remedial action where performance is falling short?

# The 'demand side' – ensuring Ministers demand and receive great policy services

We briefly discussed successful models, strategies and tools for developing excellent relationships with Ministers: what's working, what you're doing differently this time and any advice you'd give to others....



## One size does not fit all Ministers

- Need to explicitly check the preferences of the Minister: presentation preferences (visual, verbal, text – long or short), and who's in the room for meetings.
- Systems need to cater to the Ministers' preferential styles. "Relationship Ministers" prioritise building trusted relationships with key advisors; "issues Ministers" want the details and therefore need access to the experts who have produced the analysis and advice. Where less senior staff attend they need to be well prepared – trained in "oral discourse". Where only senior people attend, they need to be well briefed and expert at translating requests to more junior staff who do not have access to "horses' mouth thinking".

## Commissioning is crucial

- Get clarity at the beginning – test with colleagues, or have Ministerial office staff summarise requests and sign off with the Minister
- Ensure internal commissioning processes are robust – avoid "lost in translation"

## Build in feedback loops and continuous improvement

- Always discuss how things went after a briefing session – what did you learn, what went well, what didn't go so well?

## Ministerial office staff are key players

- Good source of feedback, translation services, Ministerial preferences.
- Be careful about the choice of who you put in Ministers' offices.

**Note:** The Minister of Finance is scheduled to attend the next Tier 2 Policy leaders session (4 December). How might we articulate our collective commitment to improved policy quality and capability? What will success look like for him?

**Action:** A small group agreed to help the Policy project team work up some material to support our discussion with MoF. We will be in touch.....



What changes will I see in the policy function?

# Analysts Forum- sharing insights with our future policy leaders

At the end of our session we joined the group of around 60 speed-dating policy analysts from 22 agencies who had come together to discuss their career aspirations and expectations and to share their ideas about how we could lift the quality and performance of the policy function...



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Tier 2s and analysts had the opportunity to share insights and challenge one another...a conversation tracker will be prepared and distributed to analysts and Tier 2s. Already there is significant interest in an ongoing Analysts network to continue the dialogue. Thanks to all the participants and especially to Laura de Haan (DPMC) and Andrew Goddard (Justice) for their work in organising the Forum.

# Next Steps

## Actions:

- Give us your thoughts on the roadmap of discussion, engagement, decisions (distributed)...what do you want to discuss and who do you want to engage with? Thanks for the suggestions already received (eg. Discussion on working across agency boundaries).
- Encourage your analysts to keep involved with the Policy Project – e.g be part of the fledgling analysts network, share the Analyst Forum tracker with colleagues...
- Let Andrew Jackson know if you can help review the EOI for aPAD (Applied Policy Advisor Development Programme): [andrew.jackson@transport.govt.nz](mailto:andrew.jackson@transport.govt.nz)

## Coming up:

- Seminar with David Albury, UK innovation expert – 18 November, 10:30 – 12noon (in your diaries)
- Next Tier 2 Policy Leaders Session – 4 December, 3:30-5pm @ MfE (Hon. Bill English in attendance)

