



The Policy Project:
Responsive today,
shaping tomorrow



The Policy Project

Tier 2 Leaders Network

4 December 2014

Conversation Tracker

Our Intent

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

This was our sixth working session. We:

- Shared insights and experience about what's working, and what's missing in current practice working across agencies and with Ministers.
- Had a conversation with Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Bill English on his views about what makes for great policy services to Ministers, what he sees is currently working well, and how senior policy leaders might collectively have robust, free and frank discussions with Ministers on policy questions that cut across agency portfolios.



Workshop participants

Nic Blakeley
**Ministry of Social
Development**

Guy Beatson
**Ministry for the
Environment**

Denise Lievore
Ministry for Women

Andrew Jackson
Ministry of Transport

Ruth Shinoda
Ministry of Education

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

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

Su'a Kevin Thomsen
Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs

Struan Little
Department of Inland Revenue

Anneliese Parkin
Ministry of Social Development

Frank McLaughlin
Ministry of Justice

Michael Papesch
Customs New Zealand

Deborah Roche
Ministry for Primary Industries

Don Gray
Ministry of Health

Jane Frances
The Treasury

Doris Johnson
Department of Conservation

Clare Ward
Families Commission

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

Kevin Guerin
**Ministry for the
Environment**

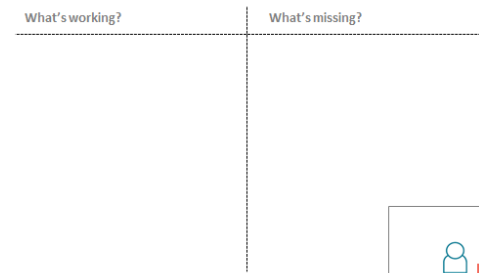
Laura de Haan
**Department of the Prime
Minister and Cabinet**

Conversation starter visual

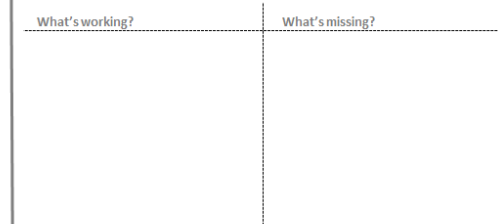
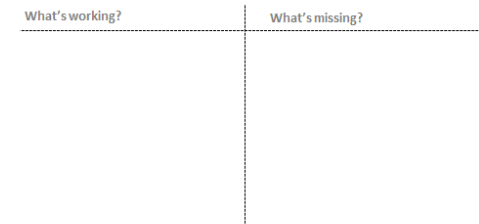
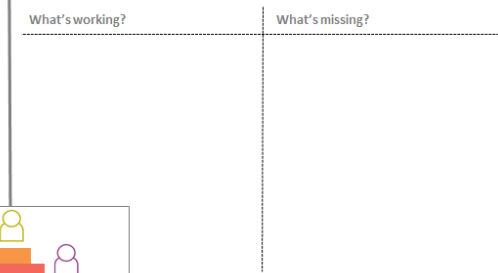
Working in small groups, we shared views on how officials can work together and with Ministers on:

- What matters: how we focus on key policy directions, goals and priorities
- Collective impact: how we can work together for results – barriers and enablers
- User-centric policy: making the best use of data, evidence, insights, engagement
- Capability: how we deliver free and frank advice today and invest in capability for future advice.

What matters: how do we agree on goals and priorities?

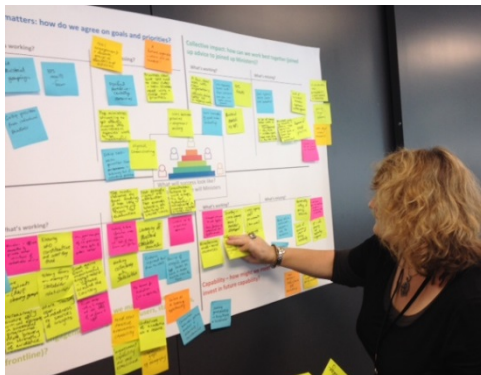


Collective impact: how can we work best together (joined up advice to joined up Ministers)?



User-centric policy – how can we make best use of evidence, engagement, insights (from users, stakeholders, frontline)?

Capability – how might we meet immediate demands and invest in future capability?



What matters: how do we agree on goals and priorities?

Collective impact: how can we work best together (joined up advice to joined up Ministers)?

What's working?

What's work

BPS goals
Masterclass
4 Year Plan
(to make a difference)

BPA
Ministerial
jumping

BPS results
- focus

Open agenda
- what are we
trying to do?

Joint Ministers
- what are our
targets?

State of what
we want
- what is our
vision?

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PM's
priority
letters

Policy position
from individual
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What matters: how do we agree on goals and priorities?

What's working?

- BPS results focus with clear targets (have shifted focus and thinking)
- PM's priorities letters
- BGA Ministerial grouping
- Four Year Plan with process refinements (though need to get rid of SOIs)
- Emerging joint BIMs – for looking at long term priorities
- Manifesto commitments gave clarity



What's missing?

- Real engagement and debate between groups of Ministers and advisors
- Priorities clear but still hard to drop non-priority activities: individual Ministers need wins and are focused on their individual priorities
- Central policy capability to help with strategic agenda setting and prioritisation
- Too many 'priorities'
- A future agenda – where are we heading, how do the priorities align overall? We need an overall vision for NZ
- Getting cross-sector priorities clear and balancing that with individual priorities and then an open trade-off process with Ministers
- Population ministries struggle to get enough nuance into mainstream agencies work to be meaningful

Collective impact: how can we work best together (joined up advice to joined up Ministers)?

What's working?

- BPS targets
- A few, clear asks with clear expectations. Officials doing better at cross-agency work
- Ministerial mandate e.g. NRS
- Joint Ministerial groups e.g. social sector Ministers priority meeting
- CE engagement improving
- Second tier collective focus – working with each other
- Some examples of good collective leadership
- Officials from different agencies at one Minister's meeting – happens but is still rare



What's missing?

- Collective priorities in legislative programme
- Inter-agency 'chew' sessions
- Lack of consistent leadership approaches across agencies
- 'Blinkered' thinking – lack of knowledge of other agencies
- Joined up Ministers – could happen more
- Cross-agency governance and working are clunky
- We don't put the user/ family at the centre – we think in terms of our needs/current services
- Co-production not contestability – pool brains and resources - Policy 'tiger' teams?
- Culture of focusing on outcomes and what needs to happen to achieve it
- Social sector work could improve:
 - commissioning
 - speed
 - goal clarity
- Relationships tend to be functional and transactional not yet mature enough to co-produce/deliver together

User-centric policy – how can we make best use of evidence, engagement, insights (from users, stakeholders, frontline)?

What's working?

- RIS – good mechanism for showing intended impact
- Stronger focus on stakeholder relationships
- Some exemplars – LAWF
- New capabilities developing
 - behavioural insights
 - big data
 - service design/design thinking
- More Treasury open-mindedness re. sources of insights
- Front-line feedback into policy through our delivery arms – some good examples
- More bravery on strength of evidence, what we know and what we don't know
- Knowing who constituents/users are and what they think/need
- Good gains from meaningful engagement – uptake around the country
- Results 9 and 10 – driving work priorities from user pain points - useful approach
- Some good stakeholder engagement models
- Private sector willing to engage and add value if we frame it right

What's missing?

- Need new iterative evaluation capability and demand for regular evaluation and review
- 'Engagement' capability not well established – have the will but don't always know the way
- Consultation fatigue with vulnerable groups. We need more thoughtful/ infrequent and change-oriented engagement
- Connection between policy makers and scientists/ academics - underusing academia as a resource
- Research strategy (cross over opportunities between research and academia) on key policy issues
- Capability gaps e.g. ethnography
- Systems across agencies to work with common 'users' are weak
- Starting with user perspectives – rather than just consulting at the end
- Working collectively with stakeholders
- Leveraging off Ministerial stakeholder connections
- Inability to share information and insights across agencies and sectors and clear frameworks for this
- Some users cut across multiple Ministers
- Consistent use of co-production approaches
- Not enough rigour or bravery on advising on 'sacred cows'/activities that could be dropped

Capability – how might we meet immediate demands and invest in future capability?

What's working?

- Strong foundations of constitutional roles as public servants
- Inherent willingness to work together
- Stronger graduate recruitment across agencies to build pipeline
- Cross agency staff secondments (two way), to develop talent and cross-fertilise knowledge
- Informal 'apprenticeships' within the policy group
- Applied policy development course – APAD cross agency training
- Ring-fencing medium-term resources
- New departmental science adviser model (new but should be good)
- Investing in cross agency training and leadership development
- Framework and explicit focus for talent delivery
- Leadership development across the sector good idea:
 - Chief Talent Officer
 - Career boards
- Starting to share good practice – Policy Project as 'accelerator'

What's missing?

- Policy stewardship – longer term policy investment
- Cross agency teams with clear outcomes (meet often, work together, common product)
- Being able to commission, interpret and use the evidence
- Data analytics capability using big/ linked up data
- Time for developing free and frank – need room in deadlines and set aside time and resources for fresh thinking
- Policy- operational cross-over training
- "End-to-end" policy skills (evidence – policy-implementation)
- New bargain free and frank and stewardship
- Capability gaps in: economics, understanding data, regulatory design
- IT and information sharing not supporting cross-agency work
- Appropriate costing of policy advice
- Lack of common view of policy capability
- Standard (across the sector) approach to assessing people
- Time to train up, coach and mentor junior staff
- We need more co-ordinated labour structures
 - progression
 - competency metric
 - Learning and development approaches

Deputy Prime Minister Hon Bill English

Key messages

Tell Ministers what they need to hear not what you think they want to hear

Great advice connects what we want to achieve on the ground with the system changes we need to make it happen

We need to make use of the full pool of intellectual capital - the academic community is a big resource that currently doesn't 'chew' enough on our problems



I would prefer less than perfect advice if you can demonstrate we are in a learning loop...and making the most of available data

Ministers don't mind seeing difference of views as long as it is competition on the issues not about the agencies promoting them

Think less about hierarchy and more about who has the right information – our model is moving away from hierarchy to networks

Ministers are the intermediate customer. The ultimate customer is the public you are serving – the industry we are regulating, the vulnerable people we need to support

Reflections and responses

Debrief discussion about what we heard, what we learnt, what next...



The stars are aligned for us to have some real change, we have:

- Government with ambition
- Engaged Minister of Finance
- System reform through the BPS programme
- Calls for more customer focus
- Starting to improve our evidence base

We all need to get behind this momentum.

We need to push ourselves more. Officials often second guess the way Ministers will react and their tolerance for risk and experimentation. We should challenge our own sense of where we think the boundaries are.

If you want the big shifts you need to concentrate on the things that really matter – we can collectively identify those things

Four year plans are good but could we decrease the other less useful layers of corporate reporting?

Could we reduce the volume of material that goes to Cabinet? E.g. 'noting' papers

Central agencies should address these issues!

There was unanimous interest in continuing the engagement with the Deputy Prime Minister (and the Minister of State Services)

Next Steps

Coming up in the New Year...

Projects reporting:

- Policy products quality assurance framework – a cross agency group has started work on this and will test it with Tier 2 group – 1st quarter 2015
- Capability maturity model – key components and stages of maturity of high performing policy shops. Prototype being developed for testing – 1st- 2nd quarter 2015

Please keep the feedback coming. It helps us to be more customer centric!

Next meeting...

February 26th 2015, 3:30 – 5pm (in your diaries)

Happy Holidays!

