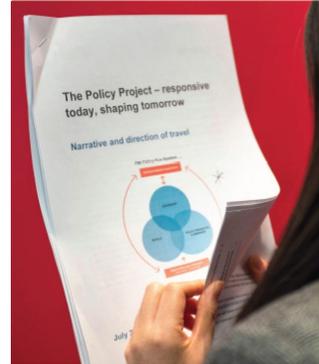


Policy Forum

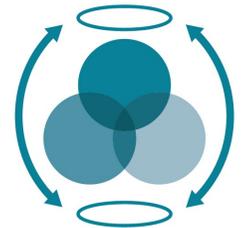
31 July 2014



The Policy Project
Responsive Today,
Shaping Tomorrow



A record of conversations and insights
from the Policy Forum



The Policy Project
Responsive Today,
Shaping Tomorrow

The Policy Project Background

The Policy Project aims to improve the performance and quality of policy advice across government. The Policy Project is led by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in collaboration with Public Service policy leaders (Departmental Deputy Secretaries with policy responsibilities).

The Policy Forum

The Policy Forum was designed as an opportunity for high performing policy professionals and thought leaders from across the public service to help co-design a roadmap and programme of work for the Policy Project.



The collaborative 'speed-dating' session included:

83
Practitioners

23
Government Agencies

5
Topic areas

During the session, we explored five topic areas together:

The draft Policy Paper and how it could be strengthened

Our people capability with a particular focus on career paths

The barriers, enablers and incentives influencing how policy practitioners work together to have collective impact

Expectations and needs of our Ministers

The Policy ecosystem including an enhanced policy toolbox and more dynamic policy cycle

How the session was structured

The group was split into ten teams across two streams exploring the five topics. We concluded each topic discussion by asking the teams to create one game-changing idea per topic.

The result was a total of 50 potential game-changing ideas.



Agencies involved:

Ministry of Transport

Ministry of Women's Affairs

Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment

Ministry of Social Development

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Culture and Heritage

Inland Revenue Department

Land Information New Zealand

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Ministry for the Environment

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Justice

New Zealand Customs Service

Ministry of Primary Industries

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority

The Treasury

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Internal Affairs

Te Puni Kokiri

Department of Corrections

New Zealand Police

Department of Conservation

State Services Commission



The Policy Paper | Forum feedback to strengthen the paper



Work programme – making change happen

Need clear map of dependencies (between phases of the work programme)

Ordering of work stream proposed action is important – what comes first?

Be clear about the relative impact and priority of the proposed solutions

How to implement the project – how will you sustain momentum?

Plan for maintenance not just change

Stop the change – finish what you're doing. Change fatigue is a system issue

Head of Profession

Idea of Head of Profession good. Agree we need a champion

Head of Profession very hard job. Would lose currency over time

What are the expected outputs?

What support and resources are required?

Evidence-informed policy

Add 'use of data' to list of evidence required

Need more evaluation and evaluation standards

Need greater tolerance for innovation – creating new evidence

Implementation – better evidence of what works to feed into future policy

What's missing – suggestions

Policy is now way more interactive – don't underplay the challenge of this

Need a tikanga Maori focus

Include operational arm and Crown/non-Crown dimension

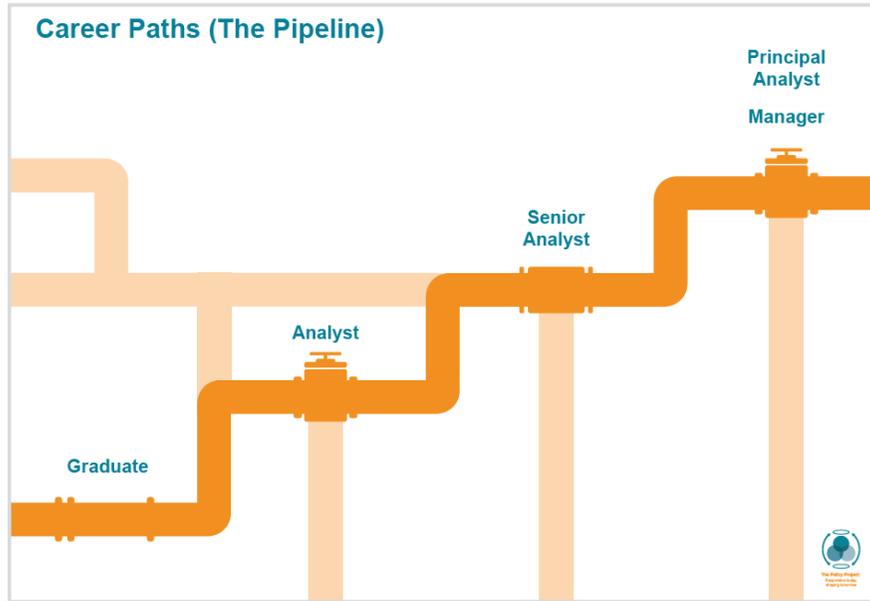
Unpack thought-leadership versus managing a big team as a challenge for senior policy leaders

Culture is missing – it is very hard to create commitment to continuous improvement



People Capability | Themes and ideas from participants

We need to define excellence in policy roles, and build the skills and capabilities to ensure a high performing policy profession.



Recruitment – attracting people in

Common and joined up graduate recruitment approaches across the public sector

Open and responsive to different levels of entry into policy profession e.g. as a 2nd or 3rd career

Single recruitment pool for whole public service based on common competencies

More entry from business, academia

Need to recognise we are competing for talent – A single recruitment pool may not effectively match talent to need

Need good way to assess whether people have the talent when joining

Get better at articulating “success factors” for career changes

Development – growing our people

Apprenticeships linked to career progression and development path

Induction to explain to people coming in why we do policy the way we do

Help people find their right future

Access to professional qualifications or work based equivalents

Deployment – moving people around, in and out

Experience in the community e.g. short secondments

Encouraging people to go out and come back

Need less friction to allow policy analysts to transfer agencies

Structured movement through key 'impact' roles – Regulation, finance, performance/evaluation, comms/stakeholders (taster's experience)

Valuing and leveraging diversity

Range of backgrounds and skillsets

Policy teams should be diverse

Single experience doesn't mean you will be good at policy

Need to know how to use specialists and experts who are not policy analysts

Need diversity of experiences

Policy community – Strengthening the Policy cadre

Need to orient ourselves around policy teams, not individuals

Generic, standardised competencies across departments

Single global policy development network

Competitive tensions across agencies leads to role creep – need cross system role descriptions

A policy profession – the debate

We don't necessarily agree that policy is a profession

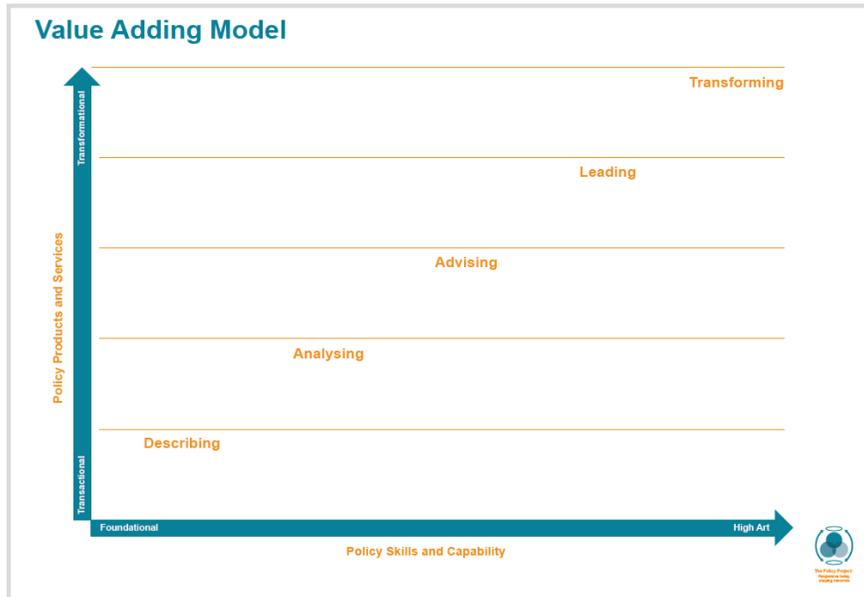
A joined-up policy world would make a more attractive profession

Develop our professional brand

Make sure the profession doesn't turn into a guild

Should be an 'open' system

Create a policy professional body Chartered Institute (including CPD/exams)



Leadership – developing a range of leaders types (differing views represented)

Technical leadership more important than people leadership

Need to value people leadership

Skill sets – First ensure core skills are strong

Define core generic skills

Distinguish between “base” capacity and exceptional skills

Public sector foundation skills, core foundation skills

Consistent management of analysts’ development

Have proven core skills – process expertise, ability to lead projects, ability to interact with managers and take direction

Coaching and mentoring outside the management line of responsibility

Emerging skills of importance – required for 21st century policy

Collaboration skills

Recognise the value of relationship skills, process skills

Coaching and mentoring skills

Ability to look across issues, join the dots

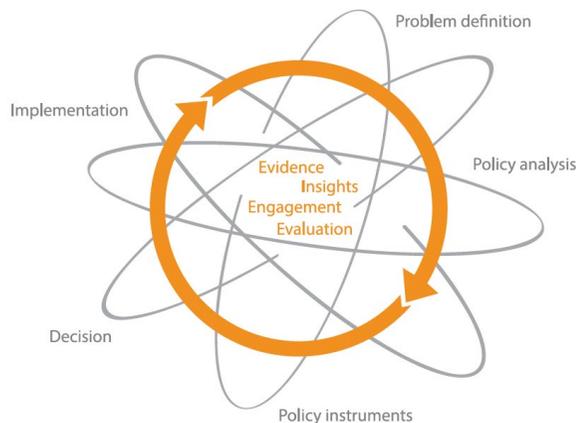
Defining excellence needs to be much clearer but is very complicated



The Policy Ecosystem | Themes and ideas from participants

To lift the overall quality of policy advice we need to update our policy toolkit and processes, and build in mechanisms for identifying and sharing good practice.

Dynamic Policy Cycle



Information – more, different and shared

Data modelling

More open source data

More geo-coded data

Meta analyses (less cherry picking of data)

Granularity of data is improving – how can we use it for regulation/operations?

Collective purchase of information for policy purposes

A single searchable government file system “Google government”

Gaps in the toolbox – where we could improve

Systems analysis

A set of tools to support systems thinking

Engagement/ drawing insights from experts

Use new methods of engagement – social media, crowd sourcing

‘wiki government’ to share policy problems

Better use of external stakeholders

Ways of consulting with the public/interest groups

Interpreting and using evidence – is weak

Innovation – look outside for models

Design through trial

Prototyping

Policy advisors need to know more about implementation

‘what works’ – insights on critical success factors

Better evaluation – sharing good practice in policy evaluation

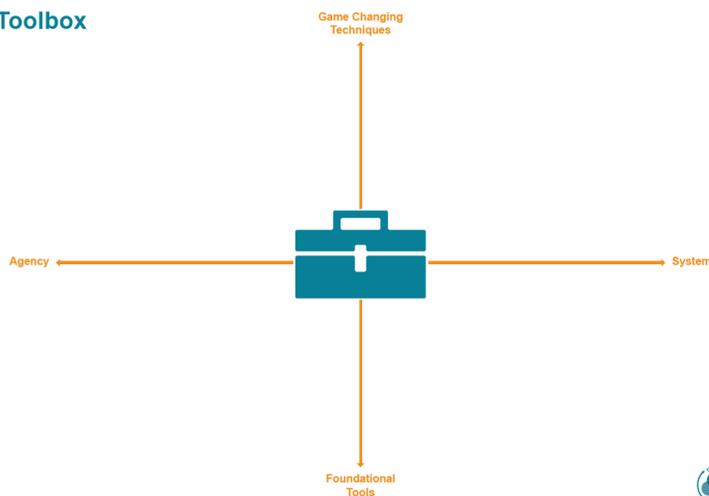
Networking capabilities

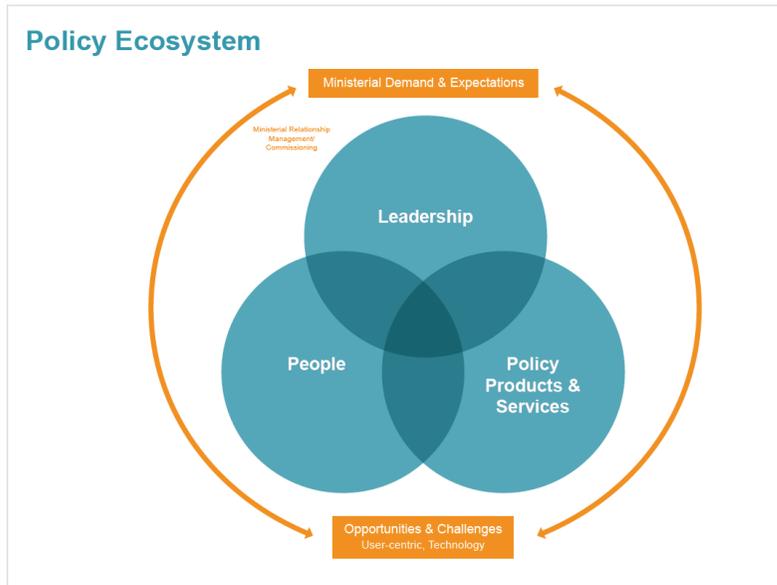
Tapping multi disciplines – economics is no longer ‘king’

Guidance on how to communicate/ tell the story

Revisit language – it needs to be appropriate and engaging

Toolbox





Develop a healthy ecosystem by design



Quality standards – understanding what good policy looks like

Common definition of quality

We need a shared understanding of what is 'good'

Shared understanding of how to benchmark 'good advice'

We need a common policy toolkit across agencies

Streamline RIS requirements

Develop a simplified applied cost-benefit analysis

Get the basics right!

Need specific sector knowledge and content toolbox

Make quality results transparent to staff

Sharing good practice

A champion for improving policy – head of the policy function?

Head of Profession could produce/maintain "the tomes" of guidance etc.

Forums and opportunities to share ideas/experience, including post-mortems on what worked and what didn't

Cross-government analysts networks

Share mistakes and user stories in person

Intranet is not the answer – people to people learning is best

Hub for information sharing – policy toolkit, products

A revamped PSI site

Repository of frameworks/ideas

We don't need to start from zero – share the best tools we already have

Leveraging and copying – we love it

Team focus – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts

Change the skill balance in the team to match the stage in the policy cycle

Use inter-agency project teams – break down inter-agency boundaries

Shared pool of expertise/ talent pool across agencies (interdepartmental team)

Need specific skills to manage matrix teams

Multi-disciplinary teams work best

We need:

- an implementation unit
- a super policy agency
- equivalent group to UK Cabinet Office strategy Unit (bold innovative blue skies policy)
- evaluation unit would provide quality and economies of scale

Lifting our collective culture

More post-mortems, less witch hunts

To lift quality we need a more open culture and better people management and leadership

Culture of people “owning” their work – don’t avoid challenging conversations

Is this about tools? – more about behaviour and culture change

Updating the way we do policy

Clear commissioning – clarify the task, engage early

Early and iterative engagement

Wide conversations at the outset to get ideas

Review and learning

Peer review across the agency

Invite academics to challenge your paradigms and papers

Review by sector stakeholders before advice is submitted to Ministers

Simple way to show people good policy is to read lots of papers. Create systems and space to make this happen

Get customer perspectives

Real time customer feedback

Learn to deal with changing context and shifting goal posts

Can we all differentiate between a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ paper?

Turn QA into a learning process

Require all papers to be read out loud

Leveraging opportunities to learn from each other





Yes Minister? | Themes and ideas from participants

Providing effective policy services to Ministers, now and in future, requires us to strike the right balance between responsiveness today and longer term policy stewardship.

Meaningful conversations – robust policy dialogue opportunities with Ministers

Create a CE's and Ministers long term strategy dialogue

Clarity on problem definition and what Ministers are trying to solve

Early, upfront conversations to establish policy space

Real time feedback mechanisms – let us know what we're doing well and where we need to improve (robust mechanism for this?)

Expect us to offer free and frank advice

Analysis, evidence and insights – expect and enable us to deliver 'the real story'

Allow us to be alongside Ministers more when they travel the country – so we see and hear what they do

Allow us the space to do the analysis and thinking – encourage evaluation

Request a review of the policy challenges around 50 years ago which are still with us today

Expect us to have networks and engagement with industry

Require us to be attuned to citizen driven policy initiatives

Expect and allow us to be engaged in public debate

Welcome new thinking and reframing of ideas

Timely dialogue – intentional engagement (early, regular and opportunistic)

Opportunities to talk to the Minister early and regularly – 'check ins' on big policy processes

Create opportunities for robust conversations such as 'chew sessions' with Ministers

See the people who are doing the work – don't restrict conversations to 'seniors'



Collective impact – leverage our collective wisdom and policy experience

Require departments to work collectively not competitively

See us together to get a collective view

Encourage sector strategies around collective Ministerial work programmes

Strengthen Stewardship – explicitly invest in our stewardship role and long term policy development

Agree defined resources and space focused on stewardship

Enable us to preserve space for longer or medium term thinking

Require central agencies to report on overall policy directions with a longer-term focus (20 year plans and projections)

Agree a model to ensure the urgent doesn't crowd out the important

Know that we are obliged to maintain the capability to deliver free and frank advice to current and future governments

Priorities – tell us what matters most

Ministers work together on long-term pathways and communicate them

Where there is conflict in long term priorities, agree alternatives to meet shorter term objectives

Cabinet committees should be more active – set the future agenda

Create Prime Minister's strategy team – a central function for new thinking

Understand we need to drop some things when we're asked to take on new work

Free and frank and evidence informed advice – real, robust, quality advice

Good evidence – highlight any weaknesses in evidence or advice

Give them what they need to know, not what you think they want

Give a story ‘based on sound logic’

Know and communicate the risk

They need a tangible description of the actual impacts of policy

Build user-insights into advice

Show that stakeholders concerns are well managed

Show that the department understands the context

Give real options and choices – don’t skew the advice to suit the department

Working collectively – giving Ministers joined-up advice

Give confidence by showing that agencies can balance sector and portfolio requirements

Have a sector view

Hear the big collective priorities and frame advice in that context

Work collectively on the big priority issues

Seek opportunities to have collective conversations with groups of Ministers – work together to prepare the ground for this

Advice delivery – frame and tailor advice and delivery to suit the Minister’s style

Understand that the Minister needs to sell the policy change to Cabinet – give them the evidence and ‘story’ to enable that

Ask how to best engage with them – and respond

Give the ‘right’ amount of information, less pages of data

Understand the drivers on Ministers and how they look at issues and frame advice accordingly (political savvy)



'A new bargain? Balance responsive today with long term stewardship'

Policy stewardship – keeping space for new ideas and longer term thinking

Give fresh thinking, seek to reframe ideas

Explicitly define the ‘customer’ as the office of the Minister now and in the future (be mindful of what future Ministers might require)

Have a view of long term trends and policy options

Seek opportunities to discuss/debate long term pathways with the Minister

Be nimble – they need ideas when they ask for them – be prepared

Commissioning and priorities – clarity, clarity, clarity

Understand what the Minister wants – and what they’re trying to fix

Seek clarity on what is required/commissioned – don’t second guess

Know the costs and communicate them – be up front about the consequences of new demands on current work and let Ministers know what they are spending

Accept that advice is contestable – support and be open to advice commissioned from elsewhere e.g independent units/inquiries/working groups



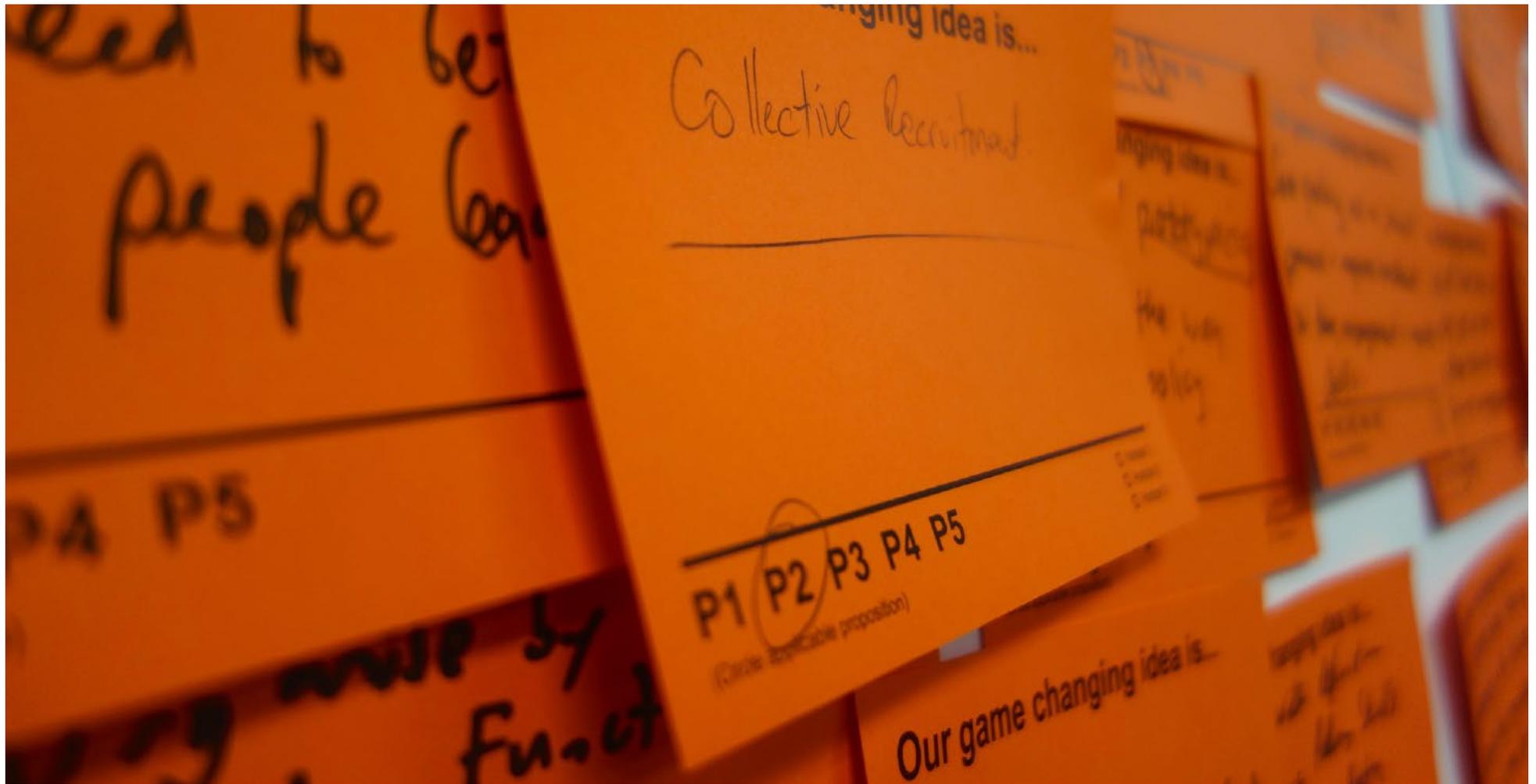
Working Together | Themes and ideas from participants

To achieve real results we need to work across agency boundaries to identify the big policy challenges, to design effective responses, and to ensure effective implementation and delivery

Barriers				
Accountabilities agency and individual based	Lack of understanding of each others businesses	Cultural attributes – competition and risk averse	Immediate/urgent crowds out important	Conflicting Minister’s requirements – delivering to our Minister’s needs and not considering the collective
<p>Data is not often shared between agencies</p> <p>Silos – Portfolio departments</p> <p>Accountabilities and mandates based on individual</p> <p>Portfolio delivery accountability on CE (silo)</p> <p>Top tier job descriptions – do they include expectations of collaboration?</p>	<p>We fundamentally don’t understand each other’s business models or incentive structures</p> <p>No knowledge of who knows what/can do what</p> <p>No knowledge of other department’s work programmes</p> <p>Contact systems “Finding who to speak to”</p> <p>Can’t share emails on desks easily</p>	<p>Afraid to make mistakes – this does not foster innovation or collaboration</p> <p>Cultures of and incentives for competition</p> <p>Conflicting incentives</p>	<p>We are responsive not proactively strategic in identifying issues</p> <p>No one has responsibility for strategic long-range issue identification</p> <p>Getting the big policy challenges on the radar is hard – no mechanisms to do it</p> <p>Lack of willingness/ability to really prioritise and drop low-value initiatives</p>	<p>Ministers with set views</p> <p>Ministers with conflicting priorities</p> <p>Competition for talent</p> <p>Staff who are poached at end of collaborative process</p> <p>Lack of agreed shared or harmonised pathways (Conflicting objectives)</p> <p>Uneven capability in different agencies</p>

Enablers			
<p>Clarity on Ministerial demand and mandate</p>	<p>Policy Network and community – intentionally build a sector wide policy network at all level</p>	<p>Shared objectives – increase the alignment of our drivers, outcomes and goals</p>	<p>Create new cross-agency teams and opportunities for people to move around the system</p>
<p>New Ministerial portfolios that reflect cross sector big issues</p> <p>Clarity of commissioning</p> <p>Need Ministerial champions to progress on cross-cutting issues</p> <p>Forums for Ministers and officials to discuss policy challenges openly</p>	<p>Social networking opportunities for analysts – the soft relationships they can build</p> <p>Regular analyst level forums and strategic work</p> <p>Informal engagement to build social capital</p>	<p>Develop a government policy work programme</p> <p>BPS Results approach – incentivises cross agency work</p> <p>Prioritise/ business planning to deliberately weight working on cross-agency priorities</p> <p>Setting up Committees underneath Cabinet – Committees that set the agenda more</p> <p>Shared ownership – e.g. mandated in Vulnerable Children’s Act</p> <p>Accept each other’s outcomes to be valid and support them</p> <p>Sector leadership helping to harmonise work programme</p> <p>Have shared output targets</p> <p>Better upfront commissioning across agencies</p> <p>4-year plans must identify specific areas and communities they are targeting</p> <p>CE’s (or tier 2) meet and mandate joined up projects</p>	<p>Easy secondment arrangements (standard templates)</p> <p>Cross-agency, multi-disciplinary working groups and peer review</p> <p>Swapping directors across agencies on cross-agency initiatives</p> <p>Shared infrastructure/ services.</p> <p>Deployable specialised skills or information – Centres of excellence</p> <p>Support mechanism for collective secretariats</p>
<p>Create collaborative spaces</p>	<p>Sector approach embedded</p> <p>Good, clear rules of engagement to enable honest conversations</p> <p>Big agencies ‘adopt’ smaller agencies to augment capability</p>		
<p>Colocation and project management support for short term co-located projects</p> <p>Build physical spaces for collaborative groups to work for fixed periods</p> <p>Placed based initiatives – agencies can work together better in local communities</p>			

Enablers				
Infrastructure and conditions – invest in enabling tools and techniques	Change funding – create different funding approaches to enable and encourage ‘working together’	Align performance management systems	Tracking progress – measures and indicators to track success in working together	Shared behaviours and culture
<p>Collective portal for key ideas – discussion papers, experiences</p> <p>Common, open document management system</p> <p>Common calendar management system</p>	<p>Fund for collaborative projects</p> <p>Cut budgets to the point you can only achieve in partnerships</p> <p>Change Vote structures! Sector budgets?</p> <p>Ring fencing resources for cross-agency action</p> <p>Co-governance with money and power attached</p> <p>Lower compliance for seed funding</p> <p>Club funding for outcomes</p>	<p>Shared performance goals/ targets</p> <p>Clear expectations on CEs and down of collaboration for collective impact</p> <p>Reward people who are prepared to contribute resources to broader priorities/ objectives</p> <p>Include understanding each other’s outcomes as a performance dimension</p> <p>Recruit/ reward for “soft” engagement skills as well as analytical grunt</p>	<p>Evidence and recognition for successful cross agency work</p> <p>Joint wins celebrated</p> <p>BPS result areas achieved</p> <p>Performance indicators. e.g. more movement of people between agencies according to priorities and due to reduced barriers</p> <p>Greater emphasis on evaluation</p> <p>Duplication avoided and processes streamlined</p> <p>Promote good policy examples</p> <p>“Lessons learned” reflection on collaboration</p>	<p>Circuit breakers for agency conflicts</p> <p>Deal with passive aggressive – we need to learn how to ‘fight’ openly</p> <p>Values/models ‘coproduction’ as the way we do things</p>



Game-changing ideas | By theme and time horizon

Each team concluded their conversation of each topic by capturing their one most compelling game-changing idea.

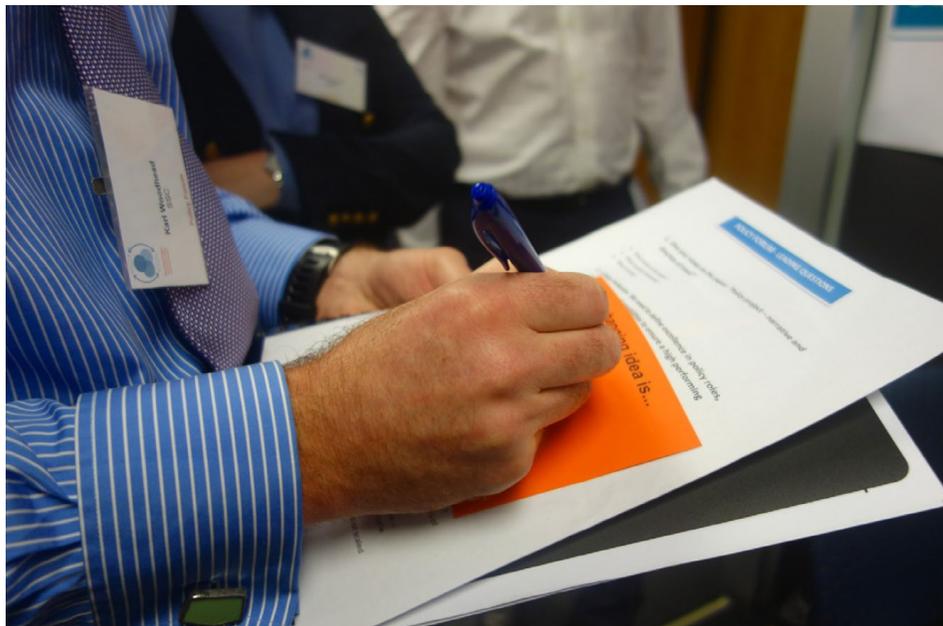
At the end of the session we shared ten of these game-changing ideas and placed all of them of against three time horizons being:

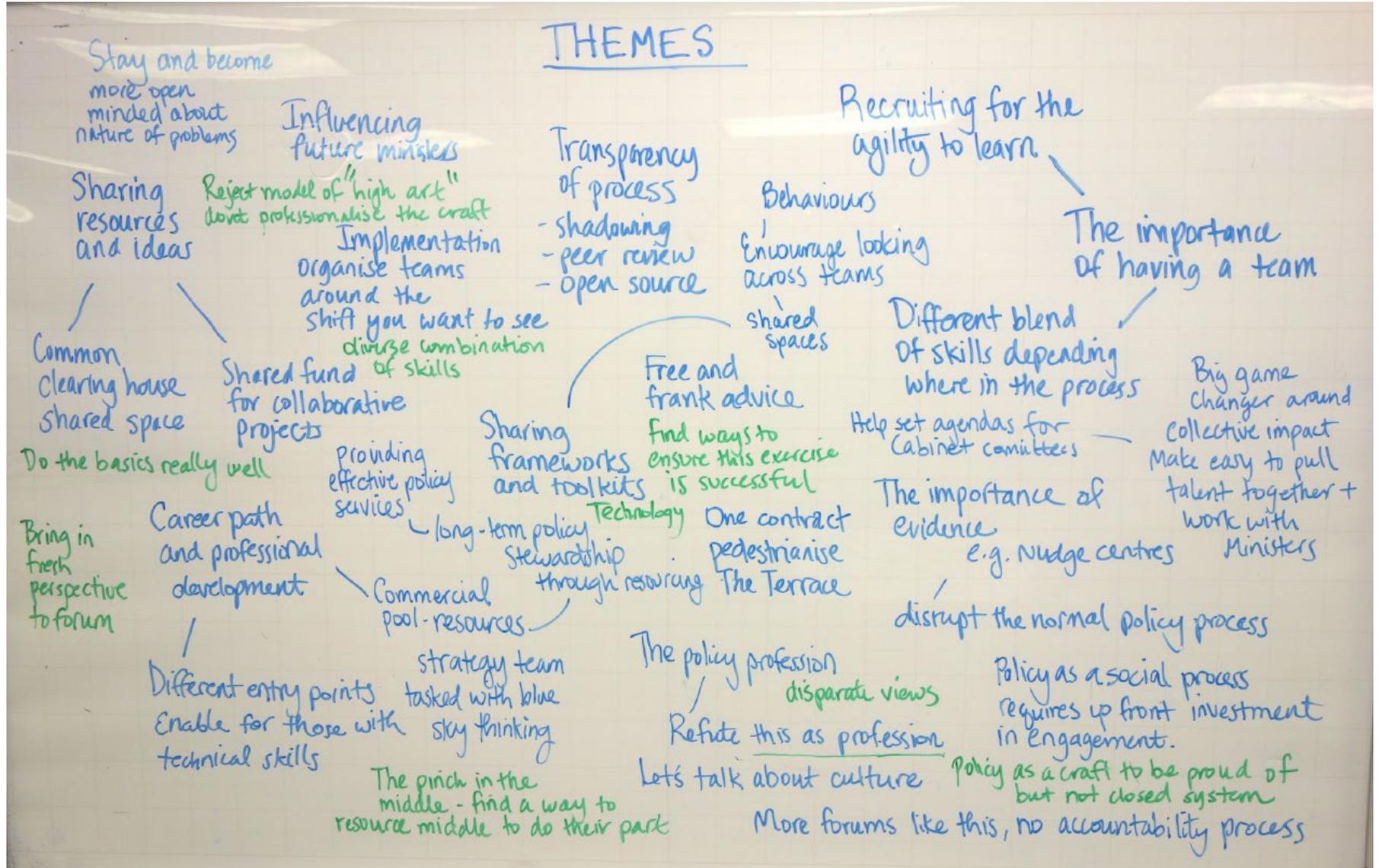
2014/2015, Reset the Foundations

2015/2016, Reframe Policies and Practices

2016/2017, Reinvigorating the Policy System

These ideas have been captured on the following pages against the time horizons as well as themes.





	2014/2015 Reset the foundations	2015/2016 Reframe policies and practices	2016/2017 Reinvigorating the policy system
System leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system champion (for the policy function) Seminars etc. akin to those of other professions to join up agencies and advisors An accessible common 'clearing house' for good ideas, processes and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage better people leadership and an unrelenting focus on excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model of culture and excellence that is consistent across agencies.
People capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the key features of the policy profession Develop a policy apprenticeship model – graduate pipeline A repository of people with specialist skills that can be accessed across agencies Develop our own policy training (like a-PAD) "so we're not supporting all the awful courses out there" Young analysts group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service wide definition of generic policy skills and progression (career paths) Pooling our talent quickly and easily to where its required – ease barriers to people moving around Cross-agency 'stretch' opportunities Professional opportunities in and out of government (secondments to the private sector) Cross government high flyers group with coaching, mentoring and development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective recruitment (One contract – one employer) and deployment of talent/ capability to where it is needed. Model based on the capability of the team – all team members do not have to have the same skills – with leadership challenge to combine them in the most effective way
Quality products – inputs, processes, quality standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the infrastructure: e. g "what works centres, behavioural insights/nudge capability Think about policy stewardship and how it fits with strategic direction in organisations Getting out of Wellington – broaden the analysis and insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trialling/ prototyping new policy processes and record critical success factors Turn our quality assurance systems into learning systems Shared spaces, shared processes for shared outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externalise evaluation – Parliament, 3rd parties, US GAO equivalent?
Quality policy services to Ministers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a protocol/agreement with the incoming Government on the implementation of State Sector Act 'stewardship' role as it relates to policy Promote 'chew's sessions between Ministers and officials Better commissioning through Ministers' offices – 'translation services' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Ministerial collectivism around outcomes – to match collective action between agencies Models/exemplars of how to have conversations and get agreement from Ministers about a percentage/quota of time and budget set aside for long term thinking, engagement to support future advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet strategy team – staffed with credible and connected officials – tasked with blue-skies & innovative policies
Policy leadership – achieving results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative policy projects supported by a shared fund and models of co-governance Independent policy review model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the authorising environment to demand working across agency boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective responsibility for policy outcomes – incentivise and reward
	Horizon 1	Horizon 2	Horizon 3

Closing exercise – owning the challenge



This two hour session generated a significant amount of constructive energy and ideas. To conclude the session, we asked each individual for one commitment on a post-it that addressed the following statement:

“To create an even higher performing policy system, I will...”

To create an even higher performing policy system, I will...

“Connect more with society about the things that really matter.”



Continue to think hard about how to improve the policy system

Focus on an open culture

As a professional collective, take decisions on the change required, support them happening, regardless

Cultivate the capacity to lead process, relationships and thinking among my staff

Promote the value of young leadership and creativity

Promote communication and links between agencies

“Promote communication and links between agencies.”



Provide strong people leadership

Focus on team development by making it explicit and discussing the underpinnings of policy formation

Do the basics well all the time!

Connect more with society about the things that really matter

Follow up on contacts from today to progress greater collaboration opportunities

Start with open collaboration as the default

Champion the value of excellent policy advice

Be more deliberate in growing people

“Encourage diversity in recruitment.”



Celebrate diversity with and across agencies

Share grad programme lessons

Think about how my policy priorities fit with others across the sector and beyond

Finish off and roll out our sector strategy

Focus on developing my people to the fullest of their potential

Encourage diversity in recruitment

Be a steward for policy in my area

Always share and learn

Devote more time to do capability development

To create an even higher performing policy system, I will...

“Drive consistent pathways for policy (long term), practitioners, products.”



- Work to make a strong leadership contribution to improve policy alliance with 2nd tier colleagues
- Integrate our people into the best ideas in the system
- Champion building strong leadership and people management capability in policy teams
- Push for a graduate programme that works across the state sector
- Contribute more to the development of my policy group
- Help the first line policy management community to do a good job

“Stay open minded and stay in touch.”

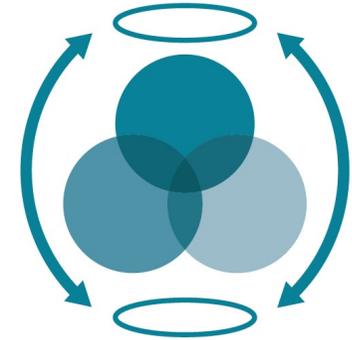


- Engage my leadership team on what the policy excellence they want to model looks like
- Promote proactive evidence generation and evaluation
- Promote a collaborative approach (realising that it is a social process)
- Make sure the discussion around skillsets and progression continues in my organisation
- Think about the future for stewardship, provide free and frank advice
- Support the professional development of my policy staff and create a “learning culture”
- Participate in this work

“Create time to think strategically.”



- Listen more closely to the views of others (especially junior staff)
- I will champion ongoing development of practice excellence to get results for New Zealand
- Enable my staff to get out of our building and out of Wellington
- Spend more time talking to my managers about how they are growing capability (not just delivering outputs)
- Drive consistent pathways for policy (long term), practitioners, products
- Stay open minded and stay in touch
- Create time to think strategically



The Policy Project
Responsive Today,
Shaping Tomorrow

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all participants for the energy and enthusiasm shown at the Forum. Your insights will inform a work programme for the Policy Project.

Please continue to debate the issues and have conversations in your policy communities – within and across your policy teams and agencies.

The Policy Project team and the members of Tier 2 Policy Leaders Network are available to support these conversations – in person or with background material. We want to keep hearing your ideas and ‘game changers’.

Thanks to the Ministry for the Environment for providing the venue and logistical support for the Forum.

Next steps

Tier 2 policy leaders network session – 11 September at Ministry for the Environment 3:30 – 5pm.

Young analysts Policy Forum – date TBC