Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor Workshop

Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

Connecting Researchers and Policymakers

Ōtautahi | Christchurch
27 September 2023

Agenda

1:40pm	Registration
2:00pm	Mihi whakatau
2:05pm	Welcome and scene setting *Juliet Gerrard*
2:10pm	*Kevin Watson*
2.15pm	Session 1: *George Slim,* Pressures facing the policy analyst trying to connect to researchers *Juliet Gerrard,* Research connections to policy
2:45pm	Session 2: *Emily Parker*, Hīkina Whakatutuki | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, Building the science base in Aotearoa New Zealand
3.00pm	*Break*
3.15pm	Session 3: Panel discussion led by CSAs with a focus on learning from case studies
5:00pm	Session 4: Speed dating and networking with drinks and nibbles – with thanks to the Australasian Research Managers Society
6.30pm	Close

ARMS

Haere mai
Welcome
Scene setting,
Juliet Gerrard
Who is, and isn’t in the room?

VISION for the role

a trusted, accessible bridge between scientists, society and government

PRINCIPLES*

Rigorous, **Inclusive**, Transparent, Accessible

*Nature, June 2018 : Four principles to make evidence synthesis more useful for policy

Session 1

George Slim

Pressures facing the policy analyst trying to connect to researchers

Juliet Gerrard

Research connections in policy

Pressures facing the policy analyst trying to connect to researchers

George Slim
Senior Advisor
Office of Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor,
Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

Universities New Zealand and DPMC project on knowledge sharing between academics and policymakers

Enablers

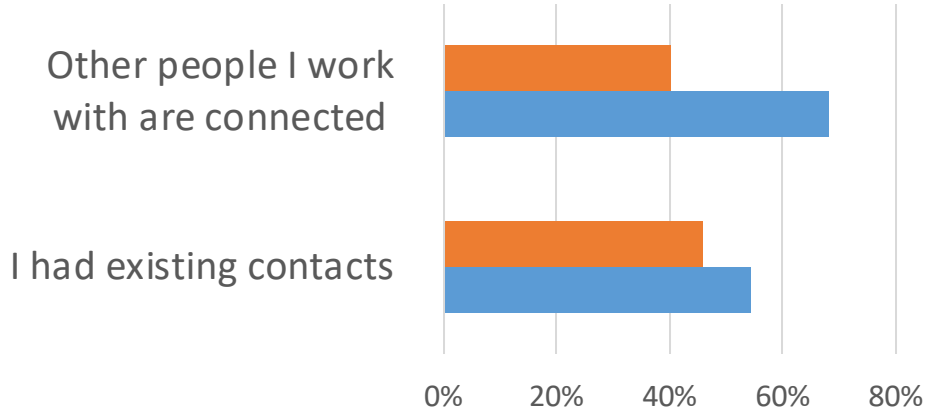
- Relationships
- Chief Science Advisors
- Conferences and other forms of knowledge exchange
- Collaborative initiatives
- Movement of staff
- Key research databases

Barriers

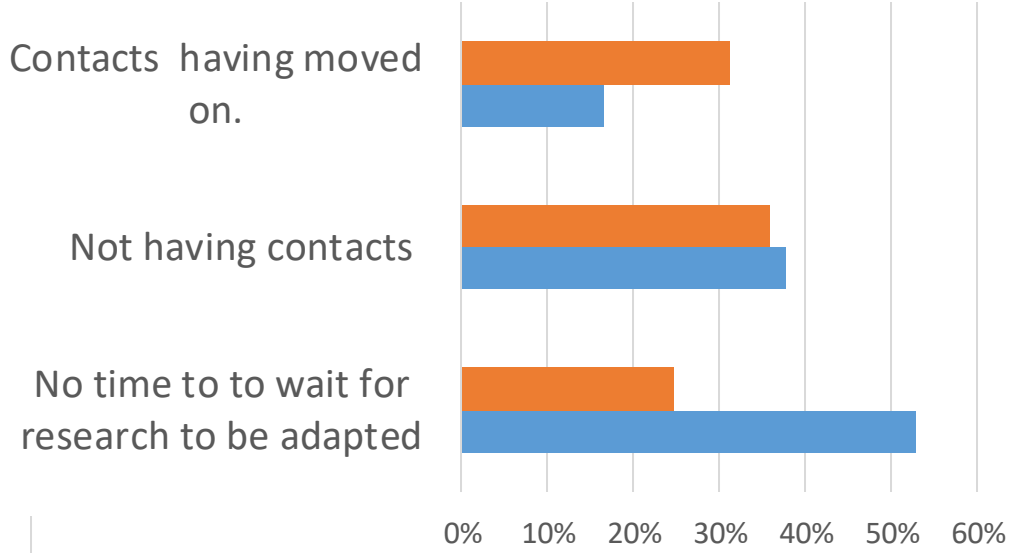
- Ways of working are not aligned
- Poor connections
- Lack of incentives
- Gaps in capacity
- Gaps in relevant research
- Commercial arrangements

OPMCSA email survey on connections

Enablers



Barriers



What would help?

Academics

Policy makers

People said:

Researchers need to be independent, and at arms'-length from political pressures

People I know have connections

Having policy-makers trained in how to connect to researchers

Who are the policy makers and how even would one connect with them?

I think policymakers are constrained and, despite the best of will, are often unable to adopt recommendations.

Senior policy managers who do not value evidence or research, but instead prioritise "good policy advice".

I think the answer is "I can find sufficiently good information without connecting to researchers, and I don't know who I should approach for more detail on particular questions when I can't find information"

Researchers not focusing on the key information gaps

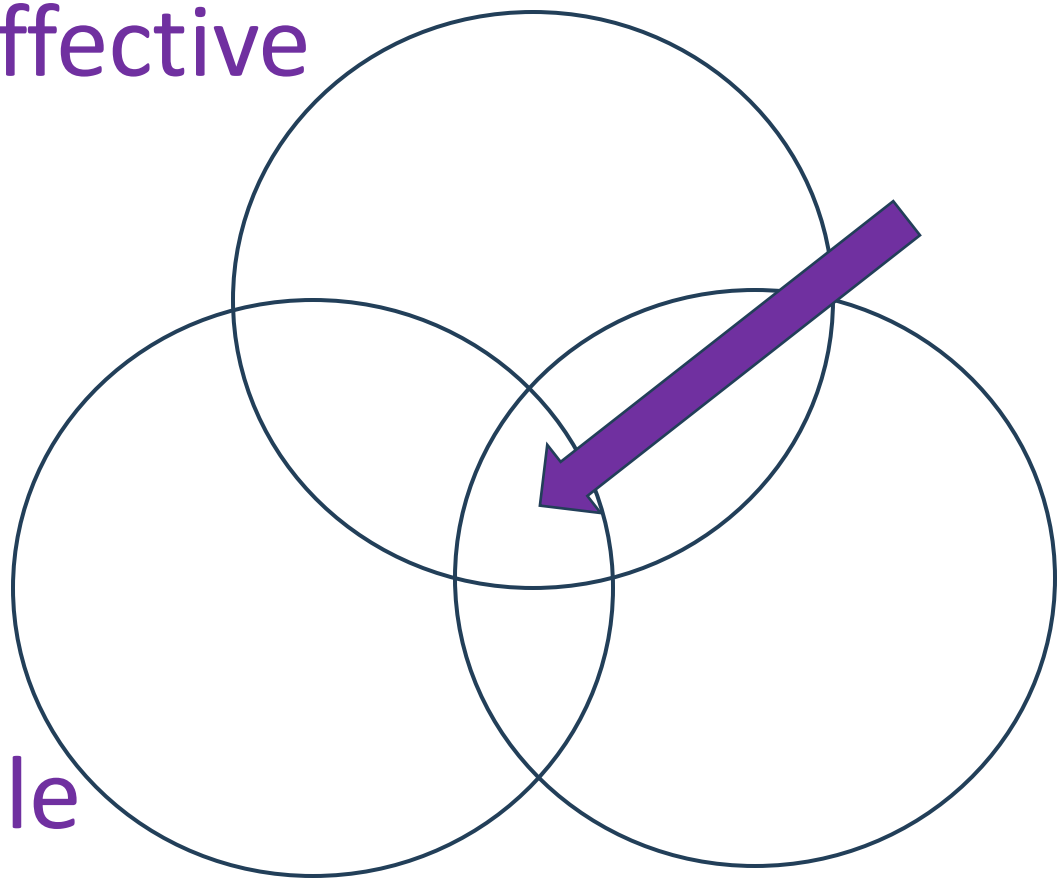
I am an ECR, having just completed my PhD. I have this week reached out to a policymaker

Policy makers not being open to something that did not fit their ideas of evidence

I do not believe they would take any notice

We develop relationships with academics and keep them informed of policy interest.

Good Policy



Resources: DPMC Policy Project

Cate Roy's project on policy connections

Hannah McKerchar's resources for getting started

Researchers connecting to policy

Juliet Gerrard

Office of Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor,
Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

Providing science advice into policy

- **Science is never the only advice**
- Science is good at defining the problem
- Science is good at identifying options
- Science struggles with definitive timely answers
- Politicians have to make decisions in defined timeframes
- Policy makers have to implement those decisions

- Presenting the “facts” rarely changed anyone’s mind
- Science debate should not be a proxy for values debate

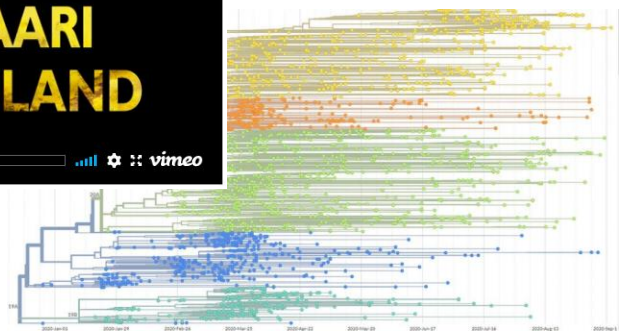
The most effective science advice is delivered just ahead of the policy agenda

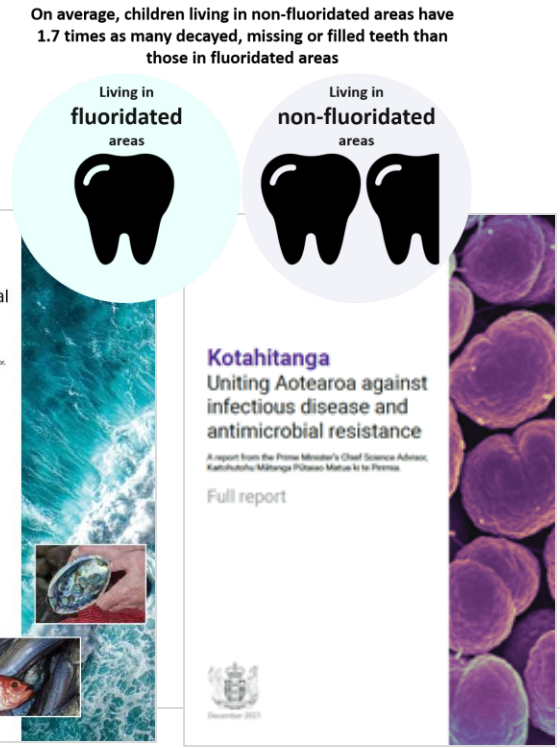
COVID-19

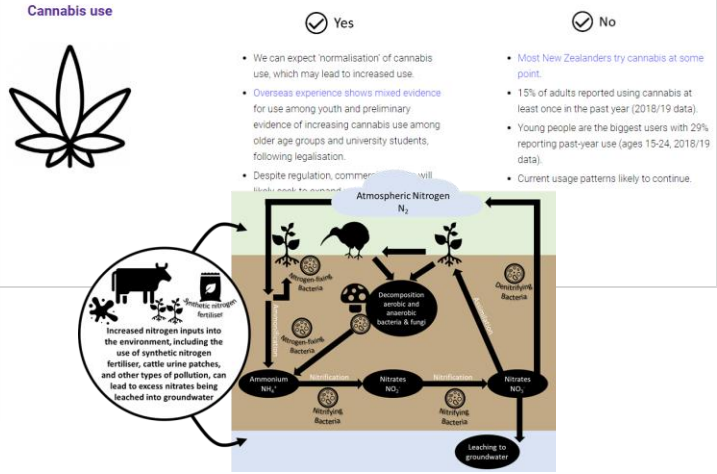
Advisory information provided to the Prime Minister as part of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

October 2021: The PM requested that Juliet and Ian Town convene an expert group to provide feedback on an earlier iteration of the traffic light system for COVID-19 protection once vaccination targets are reached. The final system is significantly strengthened compared to the consultation draft which was shared with the group. You can read the feedback provided under urgency here (PDF, 309KB)

- Download the July – September 2021 advice bundle (PDF, 3MB)
- Download the December 2020 – June 2021 advice bundle (PDF, 410KB)
- Download the September/October/November advice bundle (PDF, 2MB)
- Download the June/July/August 2020 advice bundle (PDF, 4MB)
- Download the May 2020 advice bundle (PDF, 693KB)
- Download the April 2020 advice bundle (PDF, 6MB)
- Read the March 2020 advice bundle (PDF, 611KB)



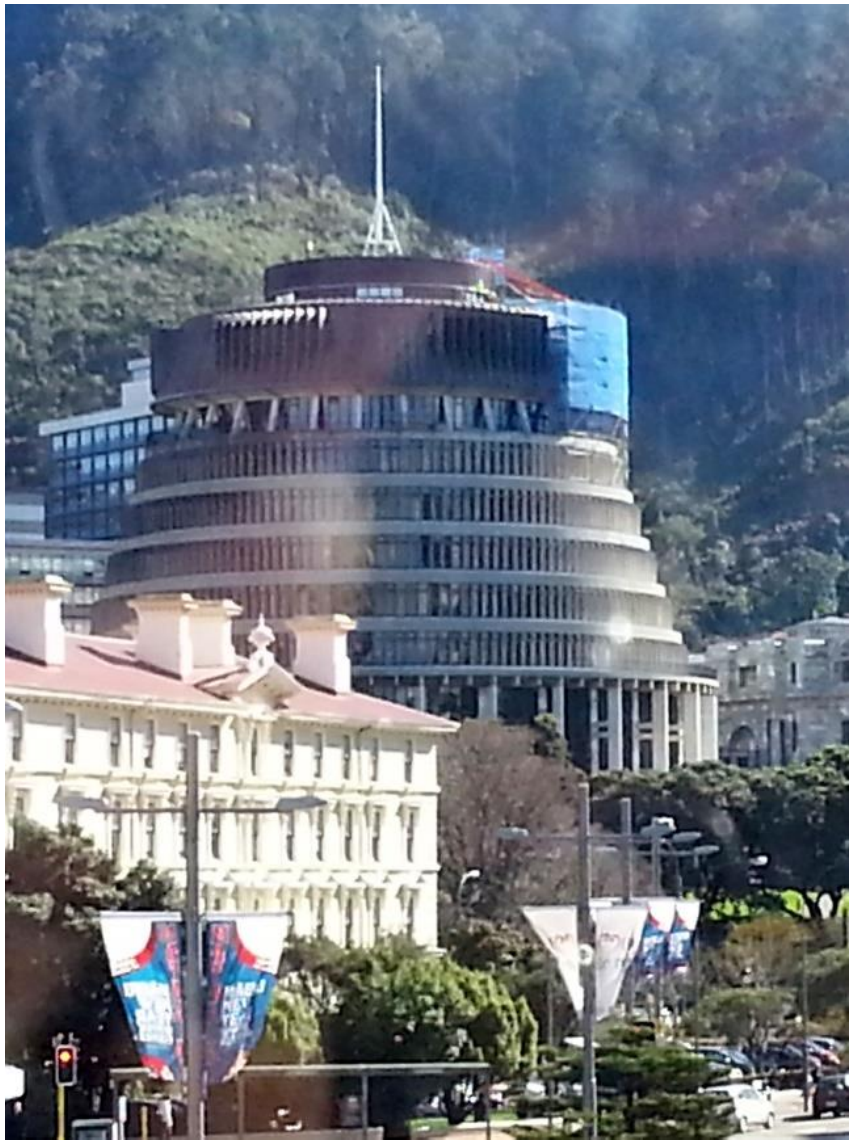




Effective science advice includes …

- **Research other than your own**
- A broad understanding of the government context
- A detailed appreciation of who in particular would value your advice

- A broad understanding of the stakeholder landscape
- A broad understanding of what other countries do in your area at the research-policy interface



CSAs can help

Ngā mihi nui

Questions?

Session 2

Emily Parker

Building the science base in Aotearoa New Zealand

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

Hīkina Whakatutuki

Session 3

Simon Kingham, Jane Cameron, Mike Fisher and Tony Moore

Ministry of Transport
Te Manatū Waka

Christchurch City Council

ChristchurchNZ

Ken Hughey

Lincoln University
Te Whare Wānaka O Aoraki

Ashleigh Fromont and Rochelle Faimalo

National Emergency Management Agency
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

Engaging in the transport and urban space

Simon Kingham, Jane Cameron and
Tony Moore, Mike Fisher

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CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch City Council

Ōtautahi Christchurch

Simon Kingham

- Ahorangi | Professor
- Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury

- Kaitohutohu Matua Pūtaiao | Chief Science Advisor,
- Te Manatū Waka | Ministry of Transport

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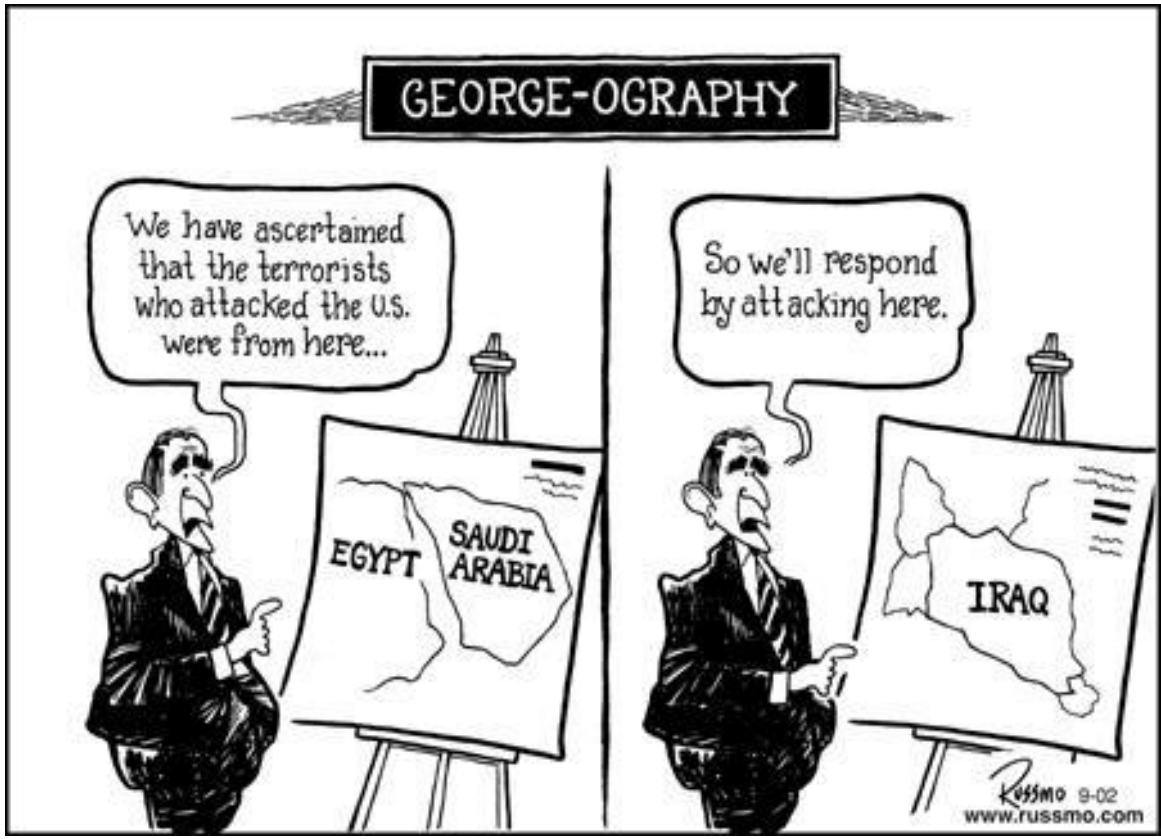
Evidence based policy

- Good evidence base
- .. leading to…
- …….good policy

- But this doesn't always happen
  - Why not?
- Researchers and policy makers not always connected



Why don’t researchers engage better

- They are busy
- They don’t know who to talk to
  - Government websites not hugely helpful
- There are few rewards for engaging
  - Journal articles
  - Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF)

Under the PBRF system of performance evaluation, academics who engage with policy-focused work, that is inherently less likely, or slower, to generate high-impact publications, are penalised. Ironically

https://sciblogs.co.nz/politecol/2016/07/14/academics-less-engaged-policy-making/

- They are often introverts

Climatic Change (2012) 112:233–242
DOI 10.1007/s10584-011-0205-7

Personality type differences between Ph.D. climate researchers and the general public: implications for effective communication

C. Susan Weiler · Jason K. Keller · Christina Olex

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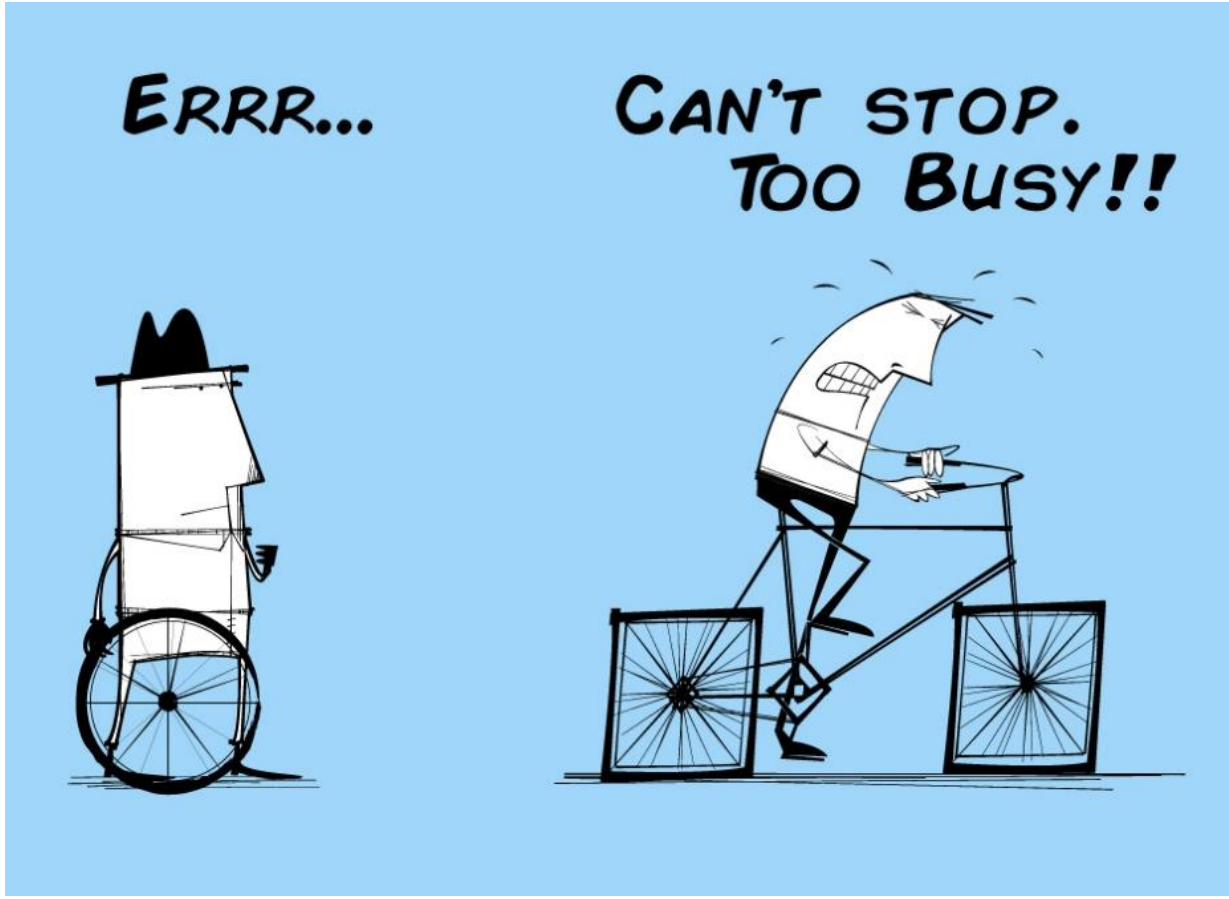
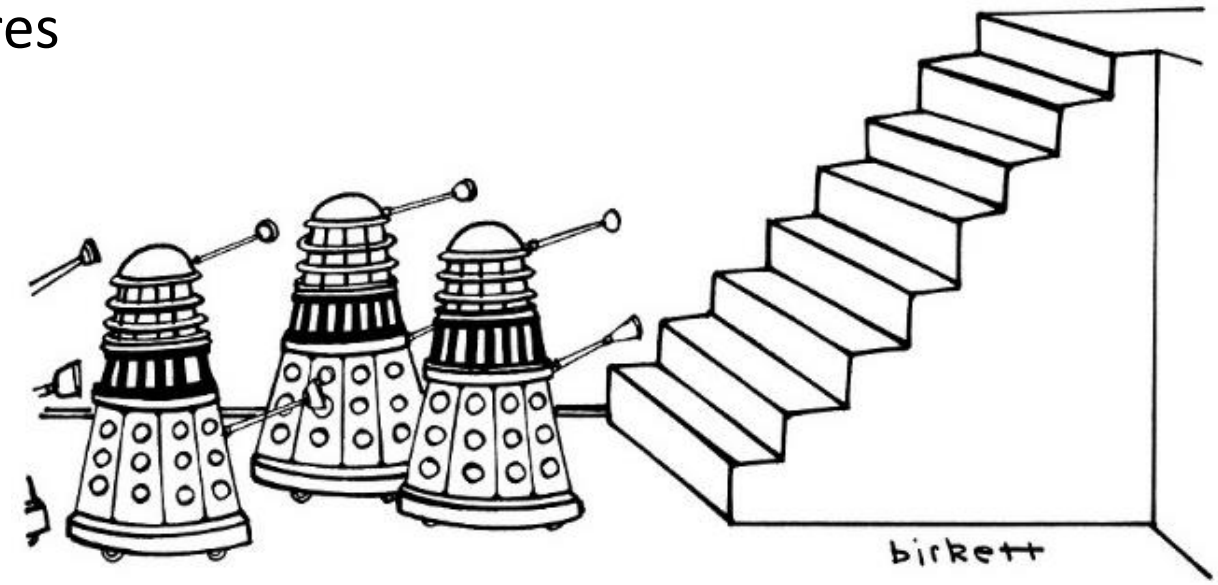
Why don’t policy makers engage better?

- They are busy
- They don’t know who to talk to
  - Hidden in all sorts of places
  - Not always obvious who are experts
- Academic literature is hard to read
  - Jargon
  - Technical
  - Theoretical
  - Irrelevant
- Timing



Why should we engage?

- See research *actually* inform policy
  - Not just journal articles and PBRF scores
- Make a difference
- Moral responsibility?
  - Tax payer funded
- To avoid missing the obvious



"Well, this certainly buggers our plan to conquer the Universe."

Models of engagement

- Chats
- Advice
  - Formal or informal
- Internships
- Scholarships
- ‘Showcase’ events
- Student projects
- Research projects
  - Advisory Board
  - Co-created

Tony Moore

- Principal Advisor, Climate Resilience
- Strategic Policy and Resilience
- Christchurch City Council

Christchurch City Council

Jane Cameron

- Team Leader, Strategic Transport
- Planning & Strategic Transport
- Christchurch City Council

Christchurch City Council

Mike Fisher

- Place and City Transformation Manager, Christchurch NZ
- Urban Tacticians
- Adjunct Research Fellow, UC

Ōtautahi Christchurch

Final comments

- It makes the research real and relevant
- Real impact – *making a difference*
- Benefits to both sides; research and policy decisions
- It needs time investment to make relationships
- Helps policy makers find time to *think*
- Fresh eyes on a topic
- Independent academic voice; local and global perspectives
- It won't happen if you sit in your office
- Career pathways

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Success and failure in the science-policy space: experience from an operational agency perspective: DOC

Ken Hughey

Emeritus Professor of Environmental Management, Lincoln University

Former CSA, Te Papa Atawhai DOC, 2014-2022

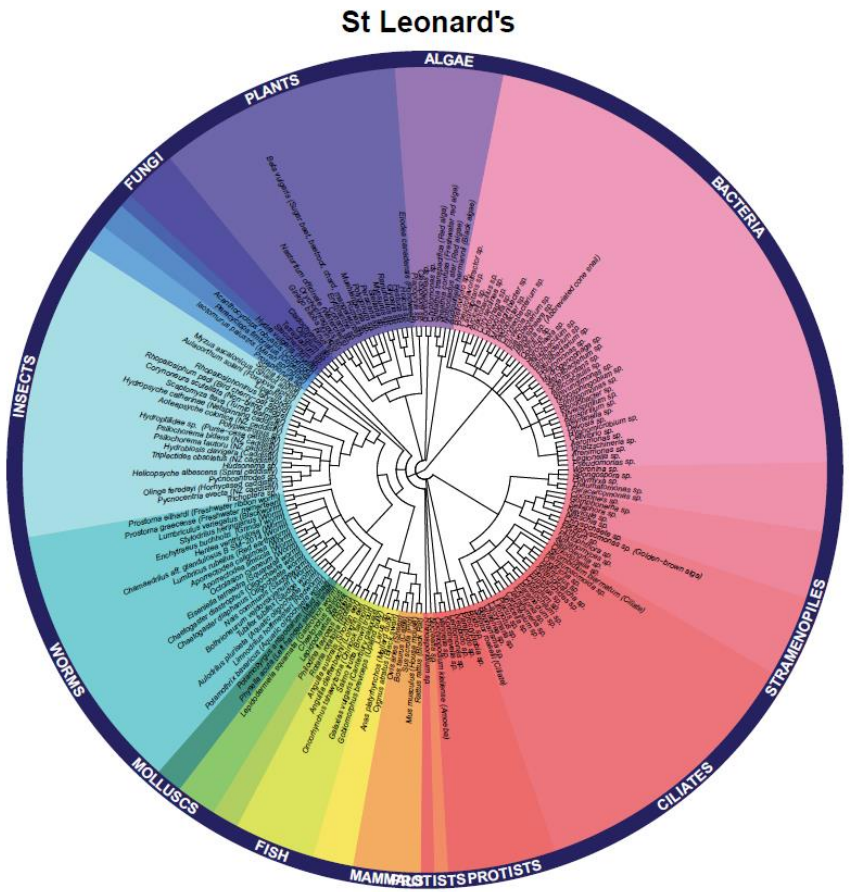
Relationships that have worked to address important issues: **the importance of trust**

- Trust is hard earned, easily lost, and once lost almost impossible to regain! I've seen the latter play out in multiple Environment Court, in several Crown-Māori contexts, and in a number of other situations (including with Ministers)
- When I was the DOC CSA I spent a lot of time building relationships, across Departments, within the Department, with science providers, and with others – mostly but not always successfully
- And when successful it delivered and I can think of multiple win-win examples …

Success:

- Much stronger relationships with key CRIs delivering:
  - GNS – improved way of thinking about and handling hazard related concerns in the recreation planning and management space, e.g., Cape Kidnappers
  - NIWA – a modernized and fit-for-purpose weather forecasting system helping recreational users on PCL and also DOC operations including 1080
  - Manaaki Whenua – a better understanding of the drivers and consequences of wilding tree spread leading to better informed and strategic management responses
- Co-governance and co-learning relationships, e.g., Tiakina kauri, bringing out the best of mātauranga Māori and western science to make real differences
- Enhanced working relationships with universities:
  - A post graduate scholarship programme delivering multiple win-win benefits
  - An improved permissions system, albeit one that still faces challenges
  - Targeted areas of research benefiting high need conservation priorities, e.g., Victoria and Canterbury universities in the kauri dieback space

‘Failure’:



Wheel of life

- An inability to help modernize & integrate (eDNA, remote sensing, AI) this country’s nature conservation and environmental monitoring system
  - Why? The power of what I call ‘embedded BAU’.
- An inability to develop a significant operational science funding system that could and should make real differences to nature conservation
  - I get blue skies and strategic science but at the end of a short day our windows of opportunity are often on very short timelines, e.g., myrtle rust and kauri die back.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

National Emergency Management Agency
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

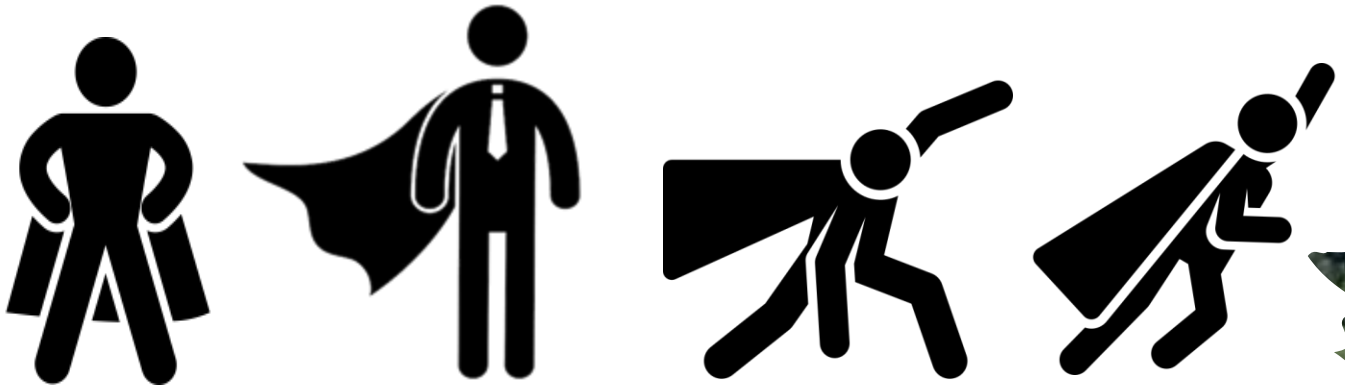
HEAVY RAIN
HIGH RISK
RED WARNINGS
CATEGORY 3
EX-TROPICAL
ORANGE WARNING
SIGNIFICANT & WIDESPREAD
HIGH PROBABILITY
STORM SURGE
DAMAGING SEVERE GALES
REDUCED RAIN THRESHOLDS
LARGE WAVES
SATURATED GROUND
CYCLONE
200 - 300 MM+

Forecasting Cyclone Gabrielle

Assembling Decision Makers

Cyclone Gabrielle Landslide Dam

Locally led, regionally coordinated, nationally supported!

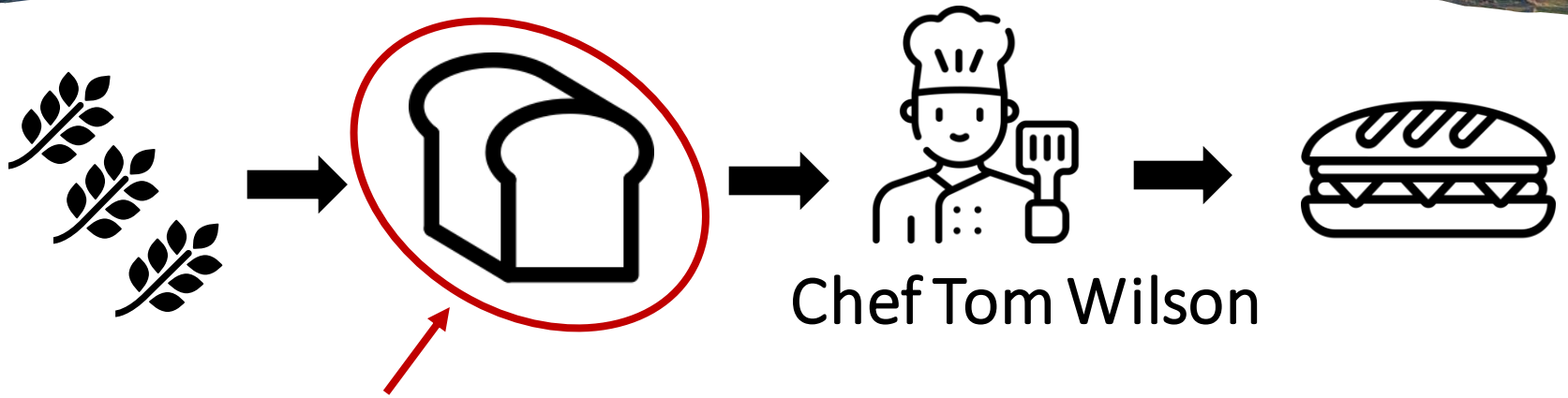


Relationships are a critical enabler in an emergency

Trusted decisions require multiple perspectives both from data and ‘on the ground’ experience

Just because it hasn’t been done before doesn’t mean it can’t be done now

The Crisis you never heard about – Taupō unrest



National decision making
(warnings)
Executive briefings
Reassurance

Enhanced Regional Planning
(known impacts)
Agency Briefings

Public communications
Reassurance

LESSONS

Existing relationships make or break decisions in an emergency

Wellbeing covers more than just life safety – it includes protecting environmental, built, economic and cultural / social aspects of lives and livelihoods.

The best science communication is served many ways

Emergency Management operators and policy makers are faced with a overwhelm of ‘important and urgent’ – be quantitative and place advice in context

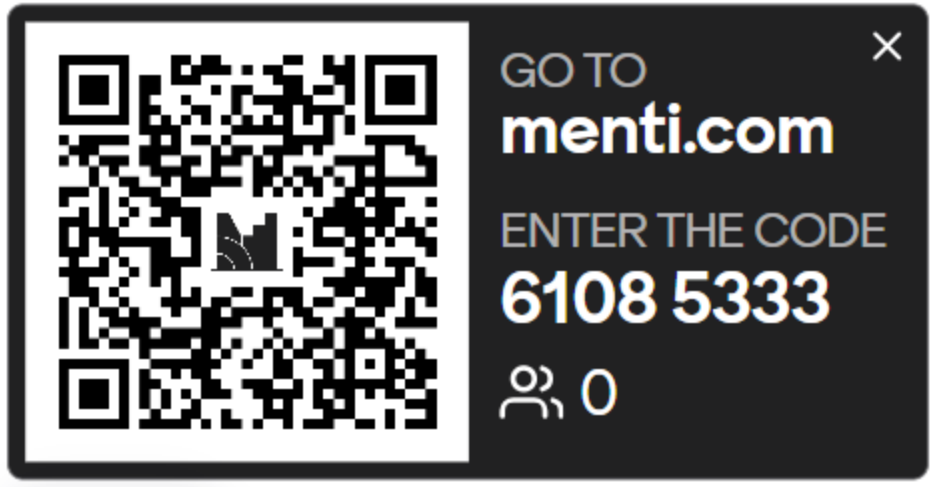
Session 4

Speed dating and Networking

ARMS
Australasian Research Management Society

We would really like your feedback, please

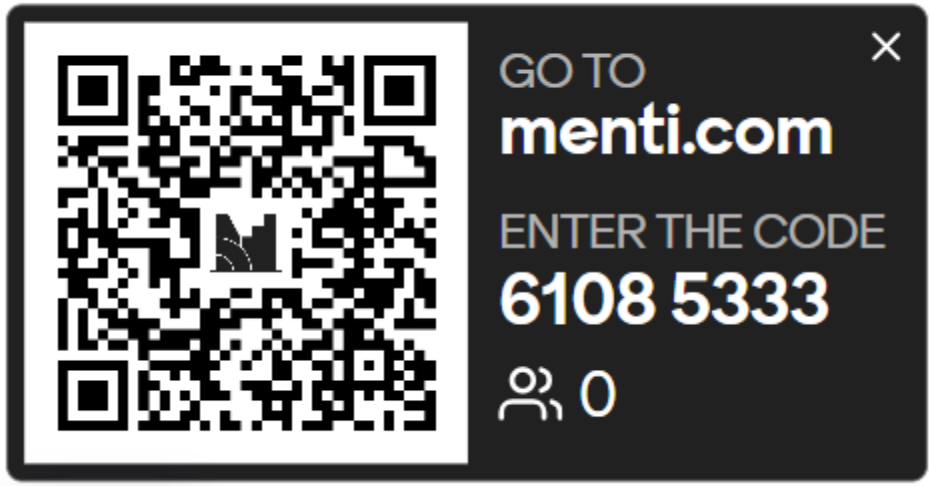
Complete the [Mentimeter poll]
Come and talk to us, or
Fill in the suggestions box outside



We would really like your feedback, please

What would be the best next steps to connect researchers and policymakers?

1st	Networking meetings
2nd	Theme based discussions
3rd	Co-operative projects
4th	Nothing else is needed
5th	Helps connect the right researchers and policy people on activities
6th	Secondments of academics in to departments and vice versa



We would like a more inclusive range of participants at follow-up events, do you have suggestions?

Ngā mihi nui

consensus-building
equitable
credible
confident
independent
multidisciplinary
inspiring
proactive
listening
accessible
trusted
connected
respectful
mana respected
approachable
inspired
representative
inclusive
responsive
influential
embracing-diversity
efficient
transparent