

Transcript | Policymaking 101: How to Deliver Great Policy Advice

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00:00:20.410 --> 00:00:45.379

Will Lockhart: Brilliant. Well, hello, everybody. Good time of the day to you all. It's, lovely to be here. I know we've got colleagues, joining from, colleagues joining from all over the world, today. I think we've got lots of colleagues joining from the Pacific, where it is, well, it's Thursday morning, it's the future, for us, because, Barry and I are joining, you know, here from a very, grey, grey, misty Europe. It's a cold

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00:00:45.380 --> 00:01:10.380

Will Lockhart: December day, but it's a pleasure to be here with you all today. It's a fantastic global audience. Welcome to this event. This is Policymaking 101, How to Deliver Great Policy Advice. My name is Will. I'm the Program Director of the Government, Energy and Climate Campus here at Apolitical, so I do lots of work on energy and climate, but for a long time, I was a policymaker in the UK government, advising on all

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00:01:10.380 --> 00:01:24.870

Will Lockhart: sorts of different things. It'll be lovely to hear from all of you. I know we've got, you know, hundreds of people watching, you know, this evening, this morning, so do pop in the chat where you're joining us from, what you do, why you're here, just be nice to kind of get a sense of what you're all up to.

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00:01:24.880 --> 00:01:39.809

Will Lockhart: Today we're going to cover the policy-making process in a way that's practical, grounded, and relevant, relevant to everyday work. We're really pleased to be bringing this event to you in partnership with ANZOG, that's the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

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Will Lockhart: ANZOG was created by governments to provide education, research, and advisory services that meet government needs, and to enhance the quality of public sector leadership and management across Australia and Aoteara New Zealand.

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00:01:52.530 --> 00:02:15.920

Will Lockhart: ANZOG brings together academics and practitioners to create spaces for learning, reflection, and sharing, and to support public servants to build capability and develop as leaders, which is great, because that's exactly what we want to do today. So you're going to hear from two experienced practitioners from Australia and Ireland, as they unpack the key stages of policymaking, and reflect on how evidence, judgment, and collaboration

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00:02:15.920 --> 00:02:40.549

Will Lockhart: can shape real-world outcomes. Now, if you're joining an apolitical event for the first time, hey, welcome! Apolitical is the world's largest network for global government. We are used by over a quarter of a million public servants and policymakers from more than 170 countries, and our mission is to make governments smarter. We do this by equipping public servants, that's you guys, with the knowledge and skills that you need

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00:02:40.550 --> 00:02:50.859

Will Lockhart: to lead the, change. So, let's see who we've got. Oh, fantastic. Look, we've got folks coming from the UK. Well, good evening from Toronto.

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00:02:50.860 --> 00:03:07.319

Will Lockhart: what is it? It's kind of the afternoon bed? You know, what is it? Maybe early evening? Not sure. Oh, fantastic. Song using coppas some nations, I'm so sorry, I'm sure I've got the, pronunciation there wrong, but Victoria, lots of... Philippines, it's 6M here in Manila, very good. Well, you've probably got a very...

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00:03:07.320 --> 00:03:25.480

Will Lockhart: sunny day ahead of you, sunnier than here in London. Look, a fantastic, fantastic array of people, and this is the point, right? You come from all over the world, you know, civil servants, government officials from all over the world should spend, you know, more time collaborating, because that is the way that we can improve, all of our capability.

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00:03:25.520 --> 00:03:50.439

Will Lockhart: A special welcome to those of you who are already members of our global policy-making community. So, apolitical in addition to events, we also have these spaces on our website where you can come together and continue the conversation that we'll start today. If you're not yet a member, please, you know, do join, the community. My colleague's posting it in the chat there. It's an online space where you can

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00:03:50.440 --> 00:03:58.519

Will Lockhart: Explore, develop, and implement... implement, excuse me, policy ideas that will, adapt to your particular circumstance.

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00:03:58.520 --> 00:04:17.730

Will Lockhart: Couple of technical notes, very quick. This event is recorded for on-demand viewing later, so don't record it yourself. Contact details for any privacy issues are in the apolitical homepage footer. If you go on our website, you can just click it there. And closed captions are available and can be toggled on or off.

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00:04:17.730 --> 00:04:19.760

Will Lockhart: On your screen settings.

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00:04:19.820 --> 00:04:35.120

Will Lockhart: Okay, before we introduce our speakers and really get going, let's run a couple of quick polls, polls about policymaking. So, first poll. Which aspect of developing policy advice do you find most challenging?

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00:04:35.500 --> 00:04:41.510

Will Lockhart: Oh, look, understanding the demand for change, discovering and digesting evidence.

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00:04:41.630 --> 00:04:49.649

Will Lockhart: Designing and testing solutions, good, here come the answers, this is great. Come on, there's hundreds of you. Clicked, don't be sh- oh good, I should click, shouldn't I?

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00:04:51.120 --> 00:04:52.709

Will Lockhart: Oh, what should I click?

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00:05:01.370 --> 00:05:04.429

Will Lockhart: Good, a few more coming in. Pretty even...

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00:05:05.530 --> 00:05:08.659

Will Lockhart: Pretty even split, that's really interesting.

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00:05:08.870 --> 00:05:32.039

Will Lockhart: So nothing kind of immediately jumping out. I mean, a slightly lower, slightly lower response rate on the demand side, that's really interesting. We might reflect on that later. But other than that, quite an even split. How fascinating. Good. Okay, so let's... so that's already really interesting. So let's have a look at, poll, number two, which is here.

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00:05:32.040 --> 00:05:39.889

Will Lockhart: How do you feel about the potential of AI? Yes, of course, AI. How do you feel about the potential for AI to support your policy work? Here we go.

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00:05:41.170 --> 00:05:43.489

Will Lockhart: quicker answers on the AI question.

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00:05:46.170 --> 00:05:47.450

Will Lockhart: Okay.

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00:05:48.640 --> 00:05:52.050

Will Lockhart: So, kind of a... so, okay, so...

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00:05:52.050 --> 00:06:10.450

Will Lockhart: looks to me like that is what, if we were running a consultation, that is what we would call a broadly optimistic set of responses, right? So that is skewed towards the optimistic end, quite clearly. Very good. All right, well, there might be a chance to talk about that, a little bit later as, the event goes on. That's great.

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00:06:10.450 --> 00:06:19.889

Will Lockhart: So, let me, introduce our speakers. We're fortunate to have two brilliant guests, joining us today. We've got Sally and Barry.

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00:06:19.890 --> 00:06:39.359

Will Lockhart: Sally Washington is an ANZOG Practice Fellow in Policy Capability and Public Management. She was the inaugural director of New Zealand's Policy Project, and has advised governments internationally. She spent 7 years with the OECD, and has supported major public sector reform. She writes and consults widely on policy, innovation, gender, and futures.

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00:06:39.540 --> 00:07:03.710

Will Lockhart: And Dr. Barry Vaughan is Principal Officer in the Department of the TSheet Social Policy Division. He leads work on civil service reform, justice, and social affairs, and he manages the Strengthening Policy Development Project. He's previously worked in policy analysis and academia, and holds a PhD in sociology. If you click on the Resources tab at the bottom of your screen, and click on the speakers, you can read their full, bios.

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00:07:03.710 --> 00:07:14.700

Will Lockhart: So we're gonna have a couple of, presentations. Sally's gonna go first, followed by Barry, but first, we've got a... we've got a sneaky question. Sorry, we're gonna put you on the spot, just to get us warmed up.

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00:07:14.700 --> 00:07:21.549

Will Lockhart: Sally, Barry, you've got to complete the sentence, right? Complete the following sentence. Delivering policy advice is like...

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00:07:22.770 --> 00:07:23.889

Will Lockhart: John, Sally, you go first.

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00:07:23.890 --> 00:07:30.299

Sally Washington: Well, I would say it's, it's a bit like housework. You only notice it when it's not done well.

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00:07:31.120 --> 00:07:38.020

Will Lockhart: Well, that's very good, that's very good, goodness me, well done. Yeah, go on, good, all right, well, go on, Barry, what do you think?

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00:07:38.260 --> 00:07:44.400

Barry Vaughan: Much better than mine, and I would just say it's like cooking a meal, you've got to start with a recipe, but then prepare to improvise, so...

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Will Lockhart: Very good. Interestingly, both domestic...

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00:07:48.320 --> 00:07:50.070

Sally Washington: What is my favourite.

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00:07:50.070 --> 00:08:09.490

Will Lockhart: What does that say about you guys? Yeah, I don't know what to say. Either you cook a lot, or you never cook. I'm not sure. Anyway, brilliant. Thank you very much, that's really fun. All right, so that's more than enough for me with all these silly questions. Let's, hand over to Sally. Sally's going to talk us through her presentation. It's a real pleasure to have you, Sally. Over to you.

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00:08:10.590 --> 00:08:23.389

Sally Washington: Actually, I'm from New Zealand, not from Australia, and I don't like having the Australian label, although Anzog is, of course, Australia, and Aotearo New Zealand. So,

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00:08:23.390 --> 00:08:35.809

Sally Washington: As well said, I've worked with a number of jurisdictions and organisations to help them improve their policy quality and capability. I see some really common problems across the world.

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00:08:36.159 --> 00:08:54.350

Sally Washington: And some of those are... we see pockets of really good practice of policy, but no consistency in performance across government, shortage of high-quality advisors, so, that means that governments often revert to consultants and contractors, and we know that a lot of our jurisdictions are trying to get rid of that.

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00:08:54.350 --> 00:09:06.160

Sally Washington: to that dependence on contractors. We see weak processes for, implementation, using evidence, evaluation, and building user needs into policy, and that came up in

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00:09:06.360 --> 00:09:25.640

Sally Washington: And some of those, those questions earlier. There's a lot of short-termism, so those sort of urgent demands, sorry, the demand side, sort of cancels out those longer-term goals that we might be working on. And we've got this... everyone's got this silo problem, so weak collaboration, alignment, and prioritization across government.

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Sally Washington: And what I find, in most jurisdictions is that,

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Sally Washington: That people jump first to saying, well, we just need to train our people better.

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00:09:34.700 --> 00:09:43.359

Sally Washington: And my response to that is always, well, what are you going to train them in? And so I like to focus more on the systems that people work in, and I think

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Sally Washington: Policy's a team sport, not an individual pursuit, so the whole... the whole thing is about how do we create the systems that support and enable good policy. And I think policy even gets... the word gets in the way quite a lot. I think what we're talking about is

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00:09:57.510 --> 00:10:22.480

Sally Washington: what public servants do is provide advice to decision makers, and that's all kind of advice, not just that big P policy advice, but sometimes it might be just, information, it might be transactional tweaks to the status quo, or it might be big transformation. So I hold that thought, because I want to talk about that later. So I... what I'm... I'm not in the business of teaching people how to do policy, so Policy 101 is a little bit of a

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00:10:22.480 --> 00:10:31.810

Sally Washington: But I'm in the business of helping people to design the systems to support and enable people to deliver good policy. So I'm just going to share some slides now.

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Sally Washington: And hopefully this will come up.

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00:10:37.660 --> 00:10:42.150

Sally Washington: And I've got to put it on... is that... can you see that now?

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00:10:42.850 --> 00:10:43.920

Will Lockhart: Yeah, perfect.

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00:10:44.220 --> 00:10:46.260

Sally Washington: Great, okay. So I...

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00:10:50.520 --> 00:10:52.859

Sally Washington: Hmm. And now it's not going down.

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00:10:53.640 --> 00:10:54.750

Sally Washington: Alright.

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00:10:56.010 --> 00:10:56.980

Sally Washington: Okay.

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00:10:57.200 --> 00:10:57.750

Will Lockhart: Yep.

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00:10:58.090 --> 00:11:14.090

Sally Washington: Okay, so the message I want to give today is that good policy depends on good policy advice, and I think we're in a situation now where there's a lot of, competition to give advice to decision makers, ministers and other decision makers.

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00:11:14.090 --> 00:11:18.360

Sally Washington: So, the public service needs to be really best in class if we're going to have that influence.

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00:11:18.420 --> 00:11:26.819

Sally Washington: That good policy depends on good policy systems, and I call this the policy infrastructure, so I'm going to talk a little bit about that. And that one of the key

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00:11:27.120 --> 00:11:40.379

Sally Washington: components of that infrastructure as a repeatable, scalable policy advice model, and this is the 5D that I'm going to talk about. And I see that as a real gap in a lot of systems. Not the Irishes, as Barry will tell us about.

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00:11:40.380 --> 00:11:48.949

Sally Washington: And then I want to just talk a little bit about, you know, what does good policy advice actually look like? Do we... do we know? Do we know what good looks like?

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00:11:49.650 --> 00:11:55.590

Sally Washington: So, these are... these are the key components of what I... what I call the policy infrastructure. So.

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00:11:55.750 --> 00:12:11.049

Sally Washington: let's just go through them. So, the leadership, we need really good leadership, so that's understanding vision and direction, understanding a strategy, having... understanding our priorities, and then that sort of notion of stewardship, so how... the longer-term outcomes that we're working towards.

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00:12:11.150 --> 00:12:30.960

Sally Washington: Policy quality systems, and I'm going to talk about that, dig down into that next, so I won't focus on that now. People capability, so I do think skills are important, having the right people in the right place at the right time. And there are some jurisdictions that have really tried to articulate the skills required for policy, and if you're interested in that, check out

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Sally Washington: the New Zealand Policy Skills Framework and the UK Policy Standards, because those two jurisdictions have really tried to articulate that. Engagement, so... and not just... not just, outside, but internal, so with other departments, with your colleagues in different functional areas in, in your departments.

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Sally Washington: And then we... we tend to focus more on the supply side, but I'm really interested in this demand side as well. So how do we... how do we engage with, with decision makers, so especially ministers.

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00:13:01.000 --> 00:13:23.060

Sally Washington: And then with stakeholders and users, so, you know, the people that we're creating policy for. And if you want to think about this, we can think about leadership as the what, policy quality systems as the how, people capability as the who, engagement as the who with, and the demand side as the why. So we think of that as this whole system.

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00:13:23.060 --> 00:13:34.029

Sally Washington: But I want to also emphasise that this system, these bits are also mutually reinforcing, so one on their own is not going to make the big difference. And if... I've developed a little,

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Sally Washington: assess... diagnostic or assessment tool around this, so if anybody's interested in that, I can share it later. But you might also want to look at the New Zealand Policy Capability Framework, and also I really like the work that the UK's doing at the moment on a policy... they're called policy system reviews, but they're really like capability reviews for policy, so check those out as well.

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Sally Washington: I'm also going to give you a page of resources at the end of this. So let's just dig into this, policy quality systems and what's part of... what's that... that's part of. So...

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00:14:04.330 --> 00:14:21.120

Sally Washington: the notion of commissioning, and we saw this in a lot of departments in New Zealand, that people were not good at understanding what the commission was, so being really clear about what you're being asked for. Planning and project management goes without saying. These quality standards and assurance, which I'll talk about later.

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00:14:21.120 --> 00:14:32.260

Sally Washington: Having a modern policy toolkit, so thinking about design methods, behavioural insights, data and analytics, and AI has come up in the early poll.

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00:14:32.540 --> 00:14:42.250

Sally Washington: And then having a really robust evidence base, so... but also rethinking what evidence is. So, yes, it's evaluation and data.

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Sally Washington: But thinking about, sort of, lived experience as evidence as well, and how we might, we might broaden that notion of what's evidence by having a good evidence base. And if you're interested in that, I've put in the resources a paper that I wrote called Hindsight, Insight, Foresight, so thinking about, what are the different, different, inputs into policy. But as I said, one of the, what I see as one of the biggest gaps

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00:15:07.160 --> 00:15:32.070

Sally Washington: in all of these, in all of the systems that I've worked with, is this notion of having a repeatable, scalable policy advice model. And I know Catherine Chabonu in Canada has developed an adaptive policy model, which I know the Canadians are using. But I know that also the organisations and jurisdictions that I've worked with have, this is something that they've asked for help on, and so

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00:15:32.070 --> 00:15:38.370

Sally Washington: I've seen, these develop. So, what I want to now show you is...

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Sally Washington: this is... this is the one that, that I've been working on for a while, and the first prototype actually was in a report that I wrote for the UK head of the policy profession. But it draws a lot on design methods, except for the notion of, decide, because I think a lot of... I'm really taken with design methods, but I think in this... in the case of policy or government decision-making, we're not the decision maker, so we really have to

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00:16:03.600 --> 00:16:06.669

Sally Washington: Think about that notion of who's going to make the decision.

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00:16:06.670 --> 00:16:24.620

Sally Washington: And I also wanted to get away from that, the old-style policy cycle, which I think is okay for teaching, but not very good for doing. So, I wanted to develop some sort of repeatable, scalable model, that would support policy people in their day-to-day work, so...

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00:16:25.150 --> 00:16:29.210

Sally Washington: More as, handrails rather than handcuffs.

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00:16:29.350 --> 00:16:36.309

Sally Washington: And something that's simple without being simplistic, and it's also scalable, so you can use it for some of those small tweaks.

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00:16:36.310 --> 00:17:01.310

Sally Washington: or a large transformation, or even just a short piece of, you know, a briefing note to a minister. So, it's based around some, some key questions. So, where's the... so, demand. Where's the demand for change coming from? And we saw that in the poll earlier. So, really understanding that context, so whether that's the political context, the front line, what's happening in the community, and understanding those signals.

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00:17:01.310 --> 00:17:11.619

Sally Washington: So, discover, what do we know about the challenge or opportunity, and what do we need to know? So, looking broad in that notion of this really, broad,

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00:17:11.650 --> 00:17:14.049

Sally Washington: Articulation of, of evidence.

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00:17:14.069 --> 00:17:33.410

Sally Washington: And then, design. So what methods are you going to use to design and test solutions, and who's going to be involved? So that's tools and methods, and understanding, so is it a technical challenge, or is it a more human-centered challenge? So you will use different tools depending on... or methods depending on what kind of a challenge it is, but you need to understand that.

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00:17:33.410 --> 00:17:38.999

Sally Washington: Decide, so how do we give good advice to decision makers to help them take a good decision?

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00:17:39.000 --> 00:17:44.940

Sally Washington: And then deliver. So how do we ensure those decisions are going to be implemented and have the desired impact? So...

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00:17:44.940 --> 00:17:57.539

Sally Washington: how do we build implementation into advice? And that's... we see that one as one of the biggest problems that, you know, policy people come up with brilliant ideas, and they throw them over the fence, and the poor implementation people have no idea what to do with them.

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00:17:57.540 --> 00:18:14.360

Sally Washington: And these two, these, these, all of these factors are, underpinned by, both evaluation and engagement. So, engagement, so, so seeking insights and testing thinking with diverse stakeholders, including, including ministers.

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00:18:14.360 --> 00:18:26.539

Sally Washington: And this notion of evaluating, so not evaluation is just something that happens at the end, but having an evaluation mindset, so you're constantly testing and reflecting and iterating through the process.

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00:18:26.540 --> 00:18:42.839

Sally Washington: And, I... one of my design gurus, Jean Ledger, from... who's just retired, but does wonderful work at the University of, Virginia, she said, you've got to be able to call your own baby ugly, and I think that's a really good notion that, you know, we've got to keep challenging ourselves.

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00:18:42.840 --> 00:18:55.639

Sally Washington: So this, this, this model was really grounded in practical evidence, and at Anzog, we tested it with, with, with some of our, with our students, who are all basically senior officials up to executive level.

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00:18:55.640 --> 00:19:01.920

Sally Washington: And 40% said that they didn't have any, some... a model like this in their departments.

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00:19:01.920 --> 00:19:25.210

Sally Washington: 90% said that this reflected their practice, and 90% said they would use this one. And I've written a paper with my colleague, Chris Walker, and I've put the link in that, into the, resources as well. So, basically to say that the, that this resonated, but one thing that resonated the most was having an animation of this model, so I'm just gonna see... hopefully this... the video will show.

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00:19:31.330 --> 00:19:39.830

Sally Washington: The 5D policy advice value chain has been developed to represent the practical and iterative process of responding to a policy challenge.

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00:19:40.100 --> 00:19:48.190

Sally Washington: Although an order is often used to communicate the 5Ds, it is important to understand that the process of developing policies is not linear.

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00:19:48.570 --> 00:19:54.540

Sally Washington: Instead, engagement must happen throughout, And an evaluation mindset is crucial.

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00:19:54.750 --> 00:19:57.379

Sally Washington: So, let's dive into each D.

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00:19:58.010 --> 00:19:59.140

Sally Washington: Demand.

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00:20:00.130 --> 00:20:05.079

Sally Washington: This involves understanding the demand for policy solutions and where it's coming from.

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00:20:05.330 --> 00:20:15.600

Sally Washington: Maybe it stemmed from ministers, feedback from people being affected by the current policy or programs, a strategic goal, or opportunities to do things better.

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00:20:15.770 --> 00:20:21.070

Sally Washington: The question to ask is, Where is the demand for change coming from? Why now?

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00:20:22.100 --> 00:20:23.150

Sally Washington: Discover.

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00:20:24.440 --> 00:20:28.059

Sally Washington: To discover in this context is the act of collecting evidence.

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00:20:28.640 --> 00:20:29.670

Sally Washington: For example.

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00:20:29.900 --> 00:20:40.400

Sally Washington: Data, research, what's been tried before, and insights from people's lived experience, and citizen needs, perspectives, or feedback from the frontline public servants.

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00:20:40.590 --> 00:20:46.340

Sally Washington: The question to ask is, what do we know about the problem or opportunity, and what do we need to know?

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00:20:47.760 --> 00:20:48.810

Sally Washington: Design.

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00:20:50.290 --> 00:21:00.590

Sally Washington: This is the process of developing evidence-informed, quality policy advice to design and test possible solutions to challenges, or to innovate how we do things.

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00:21:01.360 --> 00:21:08.060

Sally Washington: The question to ask is, what methods will we use to design and test solutions, and who will be involved?

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00:21:08.970 --> 00:21:10.130

Sally Washington: Disarmed.

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00:21:11.430 --> 00:21:17.060

Sally Washington: In this context, decide is the act of ensuring our advice can support good government decision-making.

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00:21:18.020 --> 00:21:19.800

Sally Washington: The question to ask is.

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00:21:20.030 --> 00:21:24.640

Sally Washington: How do we ensure we give quality advice to help decision makers make good decisions?

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00:21:26.940 --> 00:21:27.920

Sally Washington: Deliver.

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00:21:31.120 --> 00:21:35.840

Sally Washington: And finally, deliver is the implementation that achieves the policy intent.

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00:21:36.180 --> 00:21:38.040

Sally Washington: How are we going to make something happen?

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00:21:38.230 --> 00:21:40.660

Sally Washington: This needs to be booked into policy design.

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00:21:41.770 --> 00:21:48.059

Sally Washington: The question to ask is, How do we ensure decisions are implementable and have the desired impact?

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00:21:49.880 --> 00:21:58.009

Sally Washington: Finally, running across the whole value chain is the act of continually engaging, including with people likely to be affected by the decisions.

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00:21:58.620 --> 00:22:05.479

Sally Washington: And making sure we adopt an evaluation mindset to keep testing our assumptions against new evidence and knowledge.

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00:22:07.720 --> 00:22:14.950

Sally Washington: Okay, so that was, that's the model, and I think that animation really resonated, because it's easy to watch, but,

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00:22:15.180 --> 00:22:39.660

Sally Washington: what I'm really keen on is that people use this, and they can adapt it, and Barry will talk about the adaptation in the Irish system. I'm probably running out of time, so I just really wanted to also say that a model like this is also an anchor for other quality policy processes, so we've talked about engagement and evaluation, so a good policy toolkit, which includes a range of methods and tools.

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00:22:39.670 --> 00:22:49.299

Sally Washington: And then this notion of quality assurance, and I think we're not very good at that either, so thinking about, you know, what does good policy advice look like? So...

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00:22:49.300 --> 00:23:06.630

Sally Washington: And I just want to show quickly, so I know some jurisdictions have thought about this, so Australia has the Delivering Great Policy Model, which, has some characteristics of high quality policy. New Zealand's probably gone the furthest in this with the policy quality framework.

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00:23:06.630 --> 00:23:14.089

Sally Washington: And, and just to note that, any department in New Zealand with appropriations for policy advice has to report

128

00:23:14.090 --> 00:23:31.809

Sally Washington: policy quality... policy advice quality scores in the annual report, so it's a very, comprehensive system. And I've always liked the UK Department for Education policy test, which was probably what inspired me when... when I was, when I set up the policy project in New Zealand and... and what some of the New Zealand frameworks are based on.

129

00:23:32.970 --> 00:23:44.920

Sally Washington: And anyway, so from all of the other things that I've seen, this is just a quick thing that I've put together to think about what are the acid tests, what does quality policy advice look like?

130

00:23:44.920 --> 00:24:09.919

Sally Washington: And these can all link to the 5Gs as well. So, does your advice equip the decision maker to make a fully informed decision? Does it expose the real opportunity or problem? Does it take account of the broader context? Does it make sense of the evidence, insights, and the views of those likely to be affected? Does it offer options that can be delivered and will deliver results? And does it set out the next steps of who's doing what and when? And does it show how those results will be

131

00:24:09.920 --> 00:24:34.080

Sally Washington: measured, and I think something like this is really useful to have just before you put your advice up to a minister or a decision maker, just as those quick acid tests. So, in summary, before we hand over to Barry, because I love what the Irish have done with their whole very comprehensive systemic approach to policy quality. So, good decisions are based on good advice. Good advice requires good systems.

132

00:24:34.080 --> 00:24:38.309

Sally Washington: A key ingredient, I think, is a process model, and knowing what good looks like.

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00:24:39.210 --> 00:24:41.839

Sally Washington: So, that's me. I'll hand back to you now, Will.

134

00:24:41.840 --> 00:25:03.150

Will Lockhart: Thanks so much, Sally, that's just fantastic. I mean, just so interesting. Already lots of questions coming in, there's a little Q&A, tab there, so folks, you know, if you're at home,

do, do submit some Q&A. We'll get to those in a moment. We've also got some pre-submitted questions too, which is great. I'm gonna hand straight over to Barry. Sally, you were perfectly to time, which is brilliant, and so I'm going to hand over

135

00:25:03.360 --> 00:25:05.339

Will Lockhart: To Barry. Barry, over to you.

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00:25:05.890 --> 00:25:09.279

Barry Vaughan: Thanks, Will, and thanks, Sally.

137

00:25:09.500 --> 00:25:19.659

Barry Vaughan: just my debt to Sally will be, and the Irish government's debt, Sally will be clear. And just to reiterate what she said about, sort of, the drivers.

138

00:25:19.850 --> 00:25:28.979

Barry Vaughan: of what we're doing. I mean, I think, first of all, there's an issue of, I think, consistency across government departments, that there is not a kind of common look or feel to how we...

139

00:25:28.980 --> 00:25:41.639

Barry Vaughan: deliver policy. So we can deliver good policy, but that's not necessarily replicated everywhere. So we did feel the need, exactly as Sally said, the need to be some sort of template, agreed template, to follow. Secondly, we kind of felt

140

00:25:41.940 --> 00:25:45.349

Barry Vaughan: And this is increasingly the case, you're all aware that, you know.

141

00:25:45.610 --> 00:26:02.830

Barry Vaughan: the necessity to know what good policy advice looks like is all the more important in a kind of very volatile age, where, you know, we're getting so much advice. Government aren't short of advice, and I get representation correspondence from the public all the time. It's not to say, Prime Minister, you're doing a wonderful job, keep it up, you know, it's quite the opposite.

142

00:26:02.880 --> 00:26:21.999

Barry Vaughan: And the other issue I think we're taking increasingly seriously since the pandemic is the idea of churn or movement amongst government departments, and that, you know, there is no longer that reliance on, sort of, organic or tacit knowledge or routine, so we need to make it more explicit and almost codify how we should do policy. So increasingly, I get, you know.

143

00:26:22.000 --> 00:26:32.339

Barry Vaughan: What's the word? The early-stage career staff, that, you know, that suddenly they're thrust into a new policy area, they don't know where to begin, almost, and they're asked to, you know.

144

00:26:32.520 --> 00:26:46.920

Barry Vaughan: I don't know, how do we do, you know, kind of behavioral incentives in one, you know, for road traffic, or whatever, congestion, or, you know, and they don't really know how to begin. So that idea of setting out some kind of method is all the more important now.

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00:26:47.050 --> 00:26:55.170

Barry Vaughan: So, if you just go on to the next slide, Joel, so, Sally has highlighted this already, so, so,

146

00:26:55.650 --> 00:27:11.469

Barry Vaughan: So I came across Sally's work thanks to the offices of the OECD, where they were doing a review of our policy system. It was published in May 2023, and really, kind of, Sally's work was a way of, kind of, helping me make sense of it all, and, you know, that it didn't just, sort of.

147

00:27:12.050 --> 00:27:31.369

Barry Vaughan: frankly, degenerate into a series of individual, sort of, initiatives and piecemeal and so on, that there was a systematic basis to it. So, if anyone's interested, this report is available online, and you'll see Sally's imprint there. I think Sally was used, told me to... was it to steal with pride or steal with abandon? I can't remember which.

148

00:27:31.370 --> 00:27:37.409

Barry Vaughan: So I'm a criminologist by training, so I'm quite good at stealing things, so then we kind of stole Sally's intellectual.

149

00:27:37.410 --> 00:27:40.830

Sally Washington: It's, it's steal with pride and share with abandoned.

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00:27:40.830 --> 00:27:58.860

Barry Vaughan: Oh, share with abandon, that was it. Okay, right. I think I've probably stolen twice over. So, if you just go on to the next slide, so, so Sally's ideas really inspired us, and so what we did then, it was launched in May of this year, was precisely a policy handbook, literally a step-by-step

151

00:27:59.270 --> 00:28:13.730

Barry Vaughan: framework or template about how one should think about delivering good policy. I'll just go on to the next slide, and at the heart of it is my last slide. So, as you'll see here.

152

00:28:13.730 --> 00:28:27.859

Barry Vaughan: on the outer circle is, as it were, kind of, essentially, it's Sally's 5D model, and it follows it, you know, pretty much, and you'll see the basic rudiments underneath, so demand, you know, it's clarifying it. We all know that, you know.

153

00:28:28.120 --> 00:28:38.330

Barry Vaughan: the something must be done philosophy, but, you know, that's what we get from politicians, but not really clear. So then there's an issue of deepening understanding, where you review the evidence, and you consider it,

154

00:28:38.330 --> 00:28:49.529

Barry Vaughan: third is designing it, and I think it's important, and Sally has one of her articles, sometimes the best advice might be to do nothing, for a variety of reasons, and that we shouldn't be afraid of saying that.

155

00:28:50.180 --> 00:29:09.729

Barry Vaughan: And number four, a very important point, we call our project policy development. We're not policy makers. As Sally said, it's for the political representatives that, you know, they go through the hard slog of knocking on doors. They've got the legitimacy that we don't. So, we're saying, we don't decide policy, it's just we offer, you know, options and advice

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00:29:09.730 --> 00:29:15.450

Barry Vaughan: to elected politicians. And the last thing is the delivery. So, I mean.

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00:29:15.450 --> 00:29:22.380

Barry Vaughan: so this is what we present to new staff now, and I do think they find it helpful, but just...

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00:29:22.390 --> 00:29:38.710

Barry Vaughan: the inner ring, I'll just concentrate on that as well, because that's, I think, I always say, I use lecture, and they say, you know, people... students remember nothing from lecture. So, if you remember two things, one, remember the five D's, and two, remember what we call the three pillars. So, what we're saying is.

159

00:29:39.300 --> 00:29:41.679

Barry Vaughan: But there are 3 fundamental, sort of.

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00:29:42.200 --> 00:29:50.169

Barry Vaughan: pillars or tenets of good policy? And in the handbook, these are at the end of each stage, but almost a checklist, so,

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00:29:50.440 --> 00:30:05.469

Barry Vaughan: And they're always ever-present at each stage, so as Sally said, it's not a linear model where you first do evidence, and then you can leave the evidence behind. So the data and evidence, obviously, are crucial to good policy, but,

162

00:30:05.740 --> 00:30:18.189

Barry Vaughan: Second is what we call feasibility and implementation. Can it be done? So this idea that, you know, a great civil servant is someone who thinks of great ideas. No, it's got to be doable, you know? And the last is the legitimacy that,

163

00:30:18.520 --> 00:30:32.500

Barry Vaughan: one of our senior civil servants describes it as, you know, a minister will always ask... be asking, when you're giving him... giving him or her policy advice, you know, how will it land? You know, how will it land with the public? How will it land with the commentariat? But how will it actually

164

00:30:32.620 --> 00:30:41.419

Barry Vaughan: land on the, you know, the streets of Ireland, or England, or New Zealand, or Canada, or wherever. So I think that's a very good acid test.

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00:30:41.800 --> 00:30:55.359

Barry Vaughan: So, just... when we think about this, there's some broad, kind of, implications, then. First of all, as I said, it's not this linear model, you know, the rationalist model of policymaking, where it's evidence first, and then you, you, you, you know, you think about...

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00:30:55.370 --> 00:31:03.199

Barry Vaughan: rolling it out. Then, at the end, you think about, you know, communication to people and evaluating. They're much more bound up. Secondly, as Sally said.

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00:31:03.200 --> 00:31:21.360

Barry Vaughan: we're very contrary to the notion that there is a kind of... there's a specific policy analyst or policy profession that... policy development is a very broad church, as it were. It can involve comms teams, it can involve HR in terms of resourcing, it can involve legal analysis, and so on.

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00:31:21.830 --> 00:31:28.099

Barry Vaughan: And the other important implication, I think, of the three pillars that I see particularly is that, you know.

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00:31:28.440 --> 00:31:36.080

Barry Vaughan: that they've always got to keep each other in check, so that what I see very often with departments is they're so keen on legitimating their proposals.

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00:31:36.310 --> 00:31:42.059

Barry Vaughan: For example, co-creation is a very popular theme now, I see, in public discourse, and I always say.

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00:31:42.140 --> 00:32:01.110

Barry Vaughan: you know, when does co-creation become capture? How do you stop co-creation becoming capture? And I would say it's because when it's rooted in the evidence, so you can generate some sort of common consensus about what the issue is, that it's not just vested interest or special pleading. So that's why I think it's always important to keep them in check.

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00:32:01.110 --> 00:32:07.550

Barry Vaughan: Just a couple of things in terms of, kind of, criticisms or observations that are raised.

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00:32:07.610 --> 00:32:08.810

Barry Vaughan: But,

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00:32:08.940 --> 00:32:28.419

Barry Vaughan: First of all, as Sally said, this isn't a complete model, it's kind of what I would call a foundation on which you can then build different rooms. So, as Sally said, you know, you might want to deepen... you might want a special kind of training module on commissioning, for example. You might want, you might want to do something on rapid review, for example.

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00:32:28.420 --> 00:32:38.599

Barry Vaughan: So it's not sort of the be-all and end-all, and we're trying to develop more tools, but recognize this as a kind of a common foundation.

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00:32:39.320 --> 00:32:47.989

Barry Vaughan: The other thing I would say is that, well, the one crit... there's two, kind of, maybe, critiques I get. One is that

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00:32:47.990 --> 00:32:52.740

Barry Vaughan: Well, how do I follow this in a very fast-paced world where the Minister wants something done yesterday?

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00:32:52.740 --> 00:33:09.260

Barry Vaughan: And so what we're trying to do, just as Sally said about maybe New Zealand is the best example, a very quick kind of checklist, or, you know, a quality appraisal framework, which is, you know, the policy handbook in shorthand, that it's still important to hold on to evidence, it's still important to hold on to feasibility, and you've got to say to the Minister.

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00:33:09.370 --> 00:33:15.740

Barry Vaughan: you know, if you don't think about these things, you will run into trouble. The other thing is that this is just...

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00:33:16.010 --> 00:33:24.149

Barry Vaughan: We have a diagram in the handbook saying that this isn't the complete picture of the policy process. There are many more competing influences.

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00:33:24.150 --> 00:33:38.820

Barry Vaughan: So, for example, Ireland is a member of the European Union, but a lot of our policy is handed down by the European Union. But I still say, you've still got to think about evidence, you've still got to think about legitimacy, you know, if you say... if I try and say to the farmers of Ireland.

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00:33:38.820 --> 00:33:49.659

Barry Vaughan: Well, there's a bureaucrat in Brussels who would like you to do X or Y with your livestock. Well, you can imagine the response I'd get. So, you've still got to think about legitimation, even if you don't originate the policy yourself.

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00:33:49.750 --> 00:33:50.670

Barry Vaughan: M...

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00:33:51.100 --> 00:34:06.569

Barry Vaughan: So, I mean, as I said, those are the fundamentals of it. As I say, very grateful to Sally, and I would commend, I think, as well, we try to use our notion of that policy infrastructure, because it gives you, I think, that, as a systems view of policy analysis.

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00:34:06.570 --> 00:34:13.690

Barry Vaughan: And it stops you thinking of... it's just about training people, it's about recognizing that policy isn't in that much

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00:34:13.690 --> 00:34:17.839

Barry Vaughan: broader environment. So, I think that's my basic introduction, Will.

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00:34:19.070 --> 00:34:29.960

Will Lockhart: Fantastic. Thank you both. Thank you, Barry, for rounding us off there for the presentation part of the event. I mean, just, just super fascinating, super fascinating.

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00:34:29.969 --> 00:34:30.519

Sally Washington: Well, can I...

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00:34:30.520 --> 00:34:31.850

Will Lockhart: Yeah, go on, Sally, jumping in.

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00:34:31.850 --> 00:34:32.400

Sally Washington: price it?

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00:34:32.409 --> 00:34:34.049

Will Lockhart: Yeah, perfect.

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00:34:34.050 --> 00:34:50.189

Sally Washington: Because I think one really important one is this notion of the demand side and understanding ministers and where ministers are coming from, and I think absolutely most of our ministers and the politicians are out there talking to people all the time, much more than what we are sitting at our.

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00:34:50.199 --> 00:34:50.529

Barry Vaughan: and he's.

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00:34:50.560 --> 00:35:15.420

Sally Washington: And I'm not even a public servant anymore, so even more so, but... but I think we have this notion of, and I know you're called apolitical, but I don't think public servants should be apolitical. I think they should be politically neutral. So, because for me, apolitical is a bit like asexual, it means that you're not interested, and I think we should be absolutely interested in it, and that comes up as part of the, you know, what's the authorizing environment?

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00:35:15.420 --> 00:35:39.589

Sally Washington: really thinking about, you know, who's your minister, what are they hearing, what's happening in the ecosystem that you should know about, and really keeping abreast of that, because it's not... nothing happens in a vacuum, and it's all about timing. And actually, if people are interested, I've got a series in Apolitical on Working with Ministers. There's a whole series of articles there, so... and I've put that in the resources as well. And the other question, I think, is that

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00:35:39.590 --> 00:35:53.560

Sally Washington: that notion that everybody's worried about churn in departments, that, you know, we'll just train our people up, and they'll go and leave and they'll go somewhere else. But

if you're all working to a similar playbook, then it kind of doesn't really matter. And also, I think we should think about

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00:35:53.560 --> 00:36:16.910

Sally Washington: the public service as the public service writ large, so if they go to another department and you've trained them up, well, you're actually still building the strength of the public service. It's not like you're, you know, you're losing them completely, and so I think we... there's quite a lot of hand-wringing, I think, about how people... like, the churn in the public service, so... and nobody's really done any ev- any research, I don't think, on what's optimal churn.

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00:36:16.910 --> 00:36:27.770

Sally Washington: So, sometimes you want to, and you don't want to stay online either, so, you know, it invigorates people to be going somewhere else. And in any way, it's about teams, it's not about one person.

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00:36:28.100 --> 00:36:36.780

Barry Vaughan: Yeah. Can I just pick up two points Sally said there? I mean, I'm just, first of all, agreeing with her about, you know, not being apolitical, so I think of it being as

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00:36:36.780 --> 00:36:50.610

Barry Vaughan: political without being politicized, as it were. And the second issue that actually does worry me a bit is... we talk a lot in Ireland about a whole-of-government approach to tackle these, you know, classic wicked cross-cutting problems.

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00:36:50.660 --> 00:36:52.670

Barry Vaughan: But I think unless you have some sort of

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00:36:52.800 --> 00:37:04.790

Barry Vaughan: you know, common approach to problems, that, you know, essentially can be a sort of a... an octopus without the center, just a set of different tentacles waving at the problem, but are they grasping it? That, you know, so...

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00:37:05.010 --> 00:37:22.890

Barry Vaughan: I do worry when I hear the whole of government that we're all just sort of, you know, you know, it's like we're tackling a forest fire or a sort of one of those Californian infernos, but we're not even sure of the scale or scope of the problem, so we don't even really know if

we're addressing it successfully. So that's why I think some sort of common approach is important

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00:37:22.920 --> 00:37:26.019

Barry Vaughan: To have a coherent whole-of-government approach.

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00:37:26.400 --> 00:37:36.960

Sally Washington: And that, to me, gets back to the... a bit to the political side, is that, to what extent are we just, are we just demand-driven, or how do... how might we shape the demand as well? Because I think...

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00:37:36.960 --> 00:37:54.740

Sally Washington: you know, that whole of government stuff is... these are those big cross-cutting issues that are everybody's and nobody's, so they'll... they fall through the cracks because nobody's responsible for them, or they don't fit into your departmental accountability arrangements, but... so... but if we... if we can... if the public service as a whole can... can help.

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00:37:54.740 --> 00:38:06.420

Sally Washington: governments come up with a workable, you know, I guess missions in the UK or something, whether it's successful or not, but the idea is, I think is really interesting, is having those big

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00:38:06.420 --> 00:38:15.180

Sally Washington: cross-cutting goals that everybody can work around, and then it's about the institutions, how you build the support around those.

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00:38:17.230 --> 00:38:42.220

Will Lockhart: Yeah, I mean, brilliant exchange. And of course, the idea of those five missions, I mean, mission-driven government, it is actually, you know, it's become clear that it's fearsomely difficult to deliver, precisely because of all the, you know, actors that were involved in all of those delivery chains. Okay, brilliant, this is great. So, we're gonna... I'm not gonna interrupt for long. Folks, keep sharing questions. There's a little Q&A button at the bottom of the screen there. There's a few in there, that's great.

210

00:38:42.220 --> 00:38:43.969

Will Lockhart: So, keep them coming.

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00:38:43.970 --> 00:39:08.029

Will Lockhart: We've got, Sally's mentioned a few times, we've got this great follow-on resource. It's an article that Sally has written. It provides even more detail on the topic, lots of acronyms, the frameworks that you'll need to put your learning into action. I've seen a couple of questions about the frameworks and how we actually implement this. So if you, and my colleague Joel, he's posting this in the chat right now, if you

212

00:39:08.030 --> 00:39:22.330

Will Lockhart: If you go to the community that I mentioned, earlier, there's a place there, it's a post, and you can click on that, and if you leave a little comment, we'll send you Sally's great article with, you know, with all the material that she's talking about.

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00:39:22.340 --> 00:39:23.939

Will Lockhart: I want to come back to...

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00:39:23.940 --> 00:39:34.120

Sally Washington: People look up a little bit. I posted the... I've also posted in the community the whole series. I've got a whole series on building policy capability and that...

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00:39:34.460 --> 00:39:45.780

Sally Washington: Amazing, good. So even more reasons to get there. We've got some pre-submitted questions, and I was looking through them as you were talking, and one of them really, resonated with me. It was the one that was kind of floating around.

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00:39:45.780 --> 00:39:48.419

Will Lockhart: The back of my head while you were both talking.

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00:39:48.420 --> 00:40:06.200

Will Lockhart: Which is, you know, what do you do when the rubber hits the road? Like, this is all fine, right? So I want to be clear that I think this is, like, you know, an absolutely brilliant model, and I feel like it's a bit like... it's a bit like riding a bicycle, right? It's kind of, you know, I've made policy for, I don't know, 20 years.

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00:40:06.200 --> 00:40:25.990

Will Lockhart: And no one ever really explained to me how to do it, but there was a clear set of, like, expectations, and it, you know, definitely do this, and definitely don't do that. You sort of, you know, much like... much like housework, you're not quite sure what it is until it stops. This model was a bit like, I don't know, uncovering a set of practices that I, you know, recognized but couldn't have been able to put a finger on, so it's brilliant.

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00:40:26.190 --> 00:40:51.029

Will Lockhart: I guess my question is, like, how... it's so hard to imagine it working in the real world, right? Like, certainly in my experience in the UK, all of the aspects related to evaluation, I mean, it's just ministers are, you know, in for a certain amount of time, they want a policy announced as much as they want a policy delivered, let's be honest. The, you know, Barry, you mentioned some of the politics going on, you know, around the world right now. You know, often evaluation isn't.

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00:40:51.030 --> 00:41:01.400

Will Lockhart: what a short-term minister is interested in. I'm not doing down all ministers, I'm just saying that right now, we have a particular set of political circumstances that tend to, you know, emphasize certain things.

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00:41:02.090 --> 00:41:11.259

Will Lockhart: how do we kind of build these systems in government that encourage this kind of, like, healthy, sensible policymaking, particularly on the evaluation side? What do you think?

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00:41:12.330 --> 00:41:13.360

Will Lockhart: Barry, do you want to go first?

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00:41:14.910 --> 00:41:15.600

Barry Vaughan: Yep.

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00:41:16.380 --> 00:41:18.189

Will Lockhart: Who's go... Sally, you go first, go on.

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00:41:18.190 --> 00:41:19.269

Sally Washington: Okay, I will, because I think

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00:41:19.690 --> 00:41:43.820

Sally Washington: I think what you're describing of your experience is exactly what I saw with senior policy people in Aotearoa, New Zealand, is that, you know, you've built up your experience, and you've got kind of your own playbook, really. And to some extent, I think a lot of very senior policy people, and I know that lots of people online will be listening to this, it's kind of like, I'm smart, so I'm right, so my method's right, but actually.

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00:41:44.330 --> 00:41:56.610

Sally Washington: We want to... so the model really was an attempt to codify those practices that we see in practice anyway, because usually our training is based around the policy cycle, which really doesn't...

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00:41:56.610 --> 00:42:04.789

Sally Washington: reflect reality. And on the evaluation question, I think it's... we've also got to reframe what evaluation is, so it's not just

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00:42:04.790 --> 00:42:27.569

Sally Washington: evaluation at the end to see, you know, did it work, or, you know, was it a crap piece of policy? But having that mindset throughout, so you're thinking about up front, you're thinking about, how will we know? So, those evaluation criteria at the outset, you're a good theory of change, then you're, monitoring and testing and adapting as you go through.

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00:42:27.570 --> 00:42:36.230

Sally Washington: And then, potentially, at the other end, you might have an evaluation, but it might be... might be a process evaluation, like, did... did we do things well?

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00:42:36.230 --> 00:42:56.719

Sally Washington: Versus did we... did we do the right thing? You know? So I think... I think it's, like, really reframing that notion of evaluation, and I... I know in the evaluation community, it's getting a much broader look at... because really, it's just saying what works and what... what didn't, and what can we share... what can we learn from that to build into future policy?

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00:42:57.860 --> 00:42:58.980

Will Lockhart: Brilliant. Go, Barry.

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00:42:59.600 --> 00:43:06.209

Barry Vaughan: Yeah, just... I mean, so... I mean, look, that is a constant problem. The ministers want to, sort of, you know.

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00:43:06.890 --> 00:43:14.019

Barry Vaughan: dial down this sort of cacophony of noise and demands that come at them, and the easiest thing is, as you say, to announce X or Y.

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00:43:14.300 --> 00:43:21.270

Barry Vaughan: But you've really got to confront them with the evidence. And, you know, so one of the examples we use in our policy handbook is,

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00:43:21.270 --> 00:43:37.109

Barry Vaughan: Ireland in the 1990s was doing very badly in terms of cancer survival rates. We were in the bottom 25% of the OECD countries, and really it was because we sort of tried to appease every constituency. We were a very localized political system. So we had all our, sort of,

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00:43:37.200 --> 00:43:42.310

Barry Vaughan: Our medical centers were kind of scattered, you know, across the country, very diluted, sort of...

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00:43:42.380 --> 00:43:47.399

Barry Vaughan: Very diluted, and all the evidence would say that, you know, if you don't build up a certain level of

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00:43:47.400 --> 00:44:06.789

Barry Vaughan: a certain volume that, you know, the expertise doesn't develop, and you don't... you can't diagnose, you can't catch cancer quickly enough. So, you know, the evidence was... was used to show that there had to be a reduction, I think it was from 36 centres down to 8. Now, you can imagine the protests that sparked off, and they were huge, saying, you know, you know, you're denying us, you know.

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00:44:06.810 --> 00:44:09.200

Barry Vaughan: People were saying, you're denying us, you know, kind of...

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00:44:09.400 --> 00:44:14.210

Barry Vaughan: a medical center, but we're, you know, they very bravely went out, and the...

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00:44:14.320 --> 00:44:19.570

Barry Vaughan: It was an Irishman who worked in Canada, came back, and he said, when I went out to implement this strategy.

243

00:44:19.690 --> 00:44:38.599

Barry Vaughan: 50% of my job was communication, but he was saying, I wasn't going out to open up the strategy again, I was going out to explain the evidence to people all around the country and to occupational groups. So really, it was grounded in evidence, but as you say, it wasn't just, I'm super smart and I'm right and you're wrong. There was still a selling, or in my word.

244

00:44:38.960 --> 00:44:40.790

Barry Vaughan: world, a legitimization

245

00:44:41.170 --> 00:44:49.110

Barry Vaughan: issue that was at the root of it. So, communication and implementation were intrinsically bound up with each other. Now, that's not going to happen all the time.

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00:44:49.190 --> 00:44:56.619

Barry Vaughan: But I think you've got to say, and be honest, showing the evidence to politicians saying, this will not work. Do you... are you just in a, you know.

247

00:44:56.660 --> 00:45:11.079

Barry Vaughan: For the show, as it were. And look, politicians, as I said, it's up to them to kind of say yay or nay at the end of the day. We're not the deciders. But, you know, it's our job as independent civil servants to, you know, confront them with the best available evidence.

248

00:45:11.080 --> 00:45:24.219

Barry Vaughan: But equally well, as Sally said, you've got to say how that can respond... you know, that's not just the ivory tower evidence, it's also about how it can respond to real problems as well. I think that that's the element of walking in their shoes that's important as well.

249

00:45:25.470 --> 00:45:46.260

Sally Washington: that walking in the shoes is a... I have a little, exercise for when I do master classes on working with ministers, is, like, inviting people to walk in their shoes, and what would

be good for them. I think that, the interesting thing on, is, is the transparency of our advice as well, and, I know New Zealand has proactive

250

00:45:46.260 --> 00:45:48.499

Sally Washington: releases of Cabinet papers.

251

00:45:48.500 --> 00:45:48.880

Barry Vaughan: view.

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00:45:48.880 --> 00:46:02.120

Sally Washington: and the regulatory impact statement. So, I mean, this... the government that we've got at the moment has gone against some of the advice that departments have put up to them, but it's really clear from that transparency

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00:46:02.120 --> 00:46:09.400

Sally Washington: what a government's decided to do, that might not be what the public service has advised, and that's fine, that's what they're elected to do.

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00:46:09.400 --> 00:46:09.990

Barry Vaughan: Yes.

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00:46:09.990 --> 00:46:14.379

Sally Washington: But, but I think we still have to... our job is to have really robust

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00:46:14.380 --> 00:46:32.100

Sally Washington: advice. And the other... the other thing, we're talking about, so in communication, I think it's that wider engagement question too, and... and I think, you know, like, sometimes we think of engagement as just, you know, having a great idea and then going out and selling it and saying, you know, what do you think of my great idea?

257

00:46:32.100 --> 00:46:37.099

Sally Washington: And I know, Barry, when you, you launched the policy handbook.

258

00:46:37.100 --> 00:46:37.450

Barry Vaughan: You know...

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00:46:37.450 --> 00:47:02.300

Sally Washington: at an event, and the Tishak spoke, but it was... that event was really built around, engagement, and I think... I think there might be... we've written stuff on that as well, like, and I think it's one of the articles on apolitical, too, is putting the public into public policy and what that looks like, and when you engage, how, with who, at what stage of the policy process, because you will do different things at different places.

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00:47:02.300 --> 00:47:27.299

Sally Washington: times. And that then links back to engagement with other colleagues who are in different functional areas in our departments. And, you know, we often have those communication and engagement people, but we don't talk to them till the very end, when we've already developed something, rather than bringing them in up front. And I think that's also that notion of, you know, it's a team sport, and we don't just want policy people beaver away on their own.

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00:47:27.300 --> 00:47:29.929

Sally Washington: Knowing that, you know, bringing in their colleagues up front.

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00:47:31.170 --> 00:47:36.549

Barry Vaughan: And just that point that Sally made, again, I was speaking to the next minister recently.

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00:47:36.860 --> 00:47:39.019

Barry Vaughan: And it's back to your point, Will, about, like.

264

00:47:39.370 --> 00:47:42.290

Barry Vaughan: Trying to be the really smart person with your, you know.

265

00:47:42.410 --> 00:48:01.760

Barry Vaughan: you know, your meta-evaluations or your systematic reviews. And his point is, you know, it's a problem I have, but no offense of any academics here, but when I hear about evidence, you know, policy interface, it's academically derived or academically produced knowledge, as if it's the only form of knowledge which should figure in policy formation.

266

00:48:02.020 --> 00:48:15.260

Barry Vaughan: And my point is, well, there's administrative data, there's public opinion, that should be all in the mix, but also, it should be in the mix from the start, where we're not sort of deciding on the policy and then going out to people, what do you think about it? It's sort of...

267

00:48:15.480 --> 00:48:28.360

Barry Vaughan: you're trying to bring people along with you about, you know, what is the problem and how can we solve it, rather than... I think, certainly in Ireland, why we do it is we sort of form the policy in sort of enclosed doors, and then we sort of roll it out.

268

00:48:28.540 --> 00:48:43.999

Barry Vaughan: and then we have a phrase in Ireland, hurlers in the ditch. You know, it's sort of... the people who won't get into the game, they'll just criticize from the sidelines. And I think maybe how we do policy at present sort of exacerbates that. So, this ex-minister was talking about the Danish example, where they don't...

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00:48:44.090 --> 00:48:53.820

Barry Vaughan: develop legislation, then put out for consultation. They use consultation to generate legislation. So, I know it sounds very sensible when you say, oh, why don't we all do that?

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00:48:53.820 --> 00:48:55.340

Will Lockhart: No, no, no, it's...

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00:48:55.380 --> 00:49:12.960

Sally Washington: And that also gets to talking about, talking to a former minister, but I've seen also how we build up trust with ministers. So, to the point where, because they trust you, and they think you're a good advisor, because you're aware of what their constraints are and their environment is.

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00:49:12.960 --> 00:49:37.900

Sally Washington: I went to, there was a Cabinet committee meeting in New Zealand once, and I had written the paper, and it was... I was like, you know, I'm going to be asked some detail on this clever paper, and I went with, some very senior person from the department, and they just... the Prime Minister looked at this guy and said, G'day, John, what do you think we should do? And I thought, well, that's it. It's because they trust him. He's given them good advice in the past. So, I mean, that's... that's the other thing that we have

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00:49:37.900 --> 00:50:02.760

Sally Washington: to... also, those senior people then have to go back and talk to more junior people about what, what, what worked? How did that work with, you know, how did I build up this trust? How did we, how did we, communicate this, this, policy to ministers? And even engaging with ministers earlier, like, we had, a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance here who, who liked, he called them two sessions, so...

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00:50:02.760 --> 00:50:08.930

Sally Washington: You would go in and have conversations early on, before you'd actually... before you'd even commissioned any advice.

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00:50:08.930 --> 00:50:24.919

Sally Washington: So, just to... to throw around, it wasn't as... it wasn't as, as informal as chewing the fat, but it was really to have discussions about policy areas up front before you start, you know, before you start designing your advice.

276

00:50:25.740 --> 00:50:35.319

Barry Vaughan: Yeah, and sorry, I know you probably want to come back and will, but one last thing, sometimes we overestimate the, sort of, the fixity of issues in ministers' minds and politicians' minds, so...

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00:50:35.320 --> 00:50:35.640

Sally Washington: Yeah.

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00:50:35.640 --> 00:50:38.880

Barry Vaughan: I think of free general practitioner care in Ireland that...

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00:50:38.880 --> 00:51:03.530

Barry Vaughan: originally, when it was introduced, it was on an age-based model, and now... but our Department of Health is doing great research work, they're doing multi-criteria analysis, saying, no, much better do it by income rather than, you know, continue to escalate up by age from 6 to 8 to 12, because obviously it's people, you know, say, like me, who have a decent income, don't need it, you know? So, you know, so again, ministers, you know, are accepting that, and policy is being changed, so, you know.

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00:51:03.710 --> 00:51:10.289

Barry Vaughan: while they're still going 3GP, the sort of... the criteria by which it's, you know, rolled out are changing.

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00:51:10.770 --> 00:51:34.749

Will Lockhart: Yeah. I mean, I will jump in, because I'll ask you another question, but so much unbelievably provocative stuff there. I love this point around redefining what we mean about evaluation that Sally mentioned right at the beginning. So evaluation isn't just some big, you know, couple of sheets of paper that you produce. There's a whole different, you know, sort of ecosystem thinking about evaluation. And that brought to mind the, you know, the Ray Timely ban, on, you know, social media.

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00:51:34.750 --> 00:51:45.639

Will Lockhart: in Australia, right? Where you've got this really interesting point that you no longer have a control group, right? So you have no idea if this is going to improve the lives of six people. You just have no idea, so there's got to be other ways of evaluating the.

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00:51:45.640 --> 00:51:45.990

Barry Vaughan: effectively.

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00:51:45.990 --> 00:51:48.060

Will Lockhart: of that intervention, and that's...

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00:51:48.060 --> 00:51:49.140

Sally Washington: Can I just stop, can I stop?

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00:51:49.520 --> 00:52:01.600

Sally Washington: One thing that Barry said about, you know, the... a minister's or a decision maker's appetite for change. And I think sometimes we... we second-guess ministers as well.

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00:52:01.600 --> 00:52:01.980

Barry Vaughan: And...

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00:52:01.980 --> 00:52:10.350

Sally Washington: You know, this... the... we... I ran some, curated conversations with ministers, officials, and chiefs of staff.

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00:52:10.400 --> 00:52:30.199

Sally Washington: And it was really interesting to see the discussion between them, but one is, you know, sometimes you just have to have a go. Like, you know, it's not... you don't have to be stupid and flog a dead horse, but have a go. Like, I think we should be bold. I've so often heard people say, oh, the minister will never like that. Yeah. Well, do we know?

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00:52:30.480 --> 00:52:34.900

Sally Washington: Like, let's have a try, let's see what their appetite is for change.

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00:52:35.620 --> 00:52:41.809

Will Lockhart: I want to bring up, Jorge's question, which says, in the spirit of being able to call your baby ugly.

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00:52:42.190 --> 00:52:46.950

Will Lockhart: I could use to a minister that his or her baby is not only ugly, but actually dumb.

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00:52:46.950 --> 00:52:47.630

Sally Washington: Listen, it's a great.

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00:52:47.630 --> 00:52:57.529

Will Lockhart: I mean, I think we've been dancing around that for a while, and we've had some really good tips, but I really like the idea as well of, you know, walking in the minister's shoes, right, and the demand.

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00:52:57.530 --> 00:52:58.160

Barry Vaughan: rules.

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00:52:58.160 --> 00:53:13.230

Will Lockhart: you know, you can also use that circle around that minister to influence the minister, right? So, I mean, it's, you know, they are hearing things, and to some extent, if you've got a really ugly ministerial baby, have someone else tell the minister, right? I mean, there's a whole civil society.

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00:53:13.230 --> 00:53:17.790

Sally Washington: I love that, because I think that's influencing the influences.

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00:53:17.790 --> 00:53:18.130

Will Lockhart: Right.

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00:53:18.130 --> 00:53:30.530

Sally Washington: part of understanding the ecosystem, so who's influencing the minister? How might you, influence that influencer, rather than having to do it direct? But, yeah. Sounds a bit like Italian, but it works.

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00:53:30.530 --> 00:53:42.089

Will Lockhart: It is Machiavellian, but it works, you know, it is Machiavellian, and of course, it's all about, it's all about trying to make the best policy possible. So, you've got one minute each on the following question, which is pretty tough.

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00:53:42.490 --> 00:53:51.459

Will Lockhart: Let's see what we can do. So, Barry, you go first on this. What's the difference between good policy and good implementation?

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00:53:53.770 --> 00:54:16.979

Barry Vaughan: I don't think there is. I mean, I think this is our fallacy, that we separate them out. I mean, we have this notion in Ireland, we say, we're great at policy, we're just not great at implementation. I was like, hmm, well, isn't there a problem with the policy, you know? So we coined this phrase, implementation deficit Disorder in Ireland, that, you know, we were great at the ideas, they just never were, you know, practiced, but, you know.

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00:54:16.980 --> 00:54:17.860

Barry Vaughan: That's like...

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00:54:17.860 --> 00:54:26.179

Barry Vaughan: I have the great Irish novel within me somehow, it just isn't getting out on paper. So, I just disagree with this, that there's a distinction.

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00:54:26.970 --> 00:54:30.949

Will Lockhart: Brilliant answer. Implementation deficit disorder is my new phrase of the week.

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00:54:32.010 --> 00:54:54.460

Sally Washington: I'm the same, and that's why I built... tried to build that delivery side into the model, that implementation has to be thought about up front, and even bringing those colleagues in up front, because we want an end-to-end process. We don't want to just then, as I said, you know, often we come up with these brilliant ideas, which is the policy, and then throw them over the fence to the implementation people.

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00:54:54.460 --> 00:54:55.140

Barry Vaughan: gift.

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00:54:55.140 --> 00:55:10.660

Sally Washington: no idea what the actual intent was. And also, those people who are on the front line are the ones who really understand what's working and what's not working now, so it's really important that they come up front to say, is this going to work? Well, what's going to work?

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00:55:11.040 --> 00:55:22.050

Barry Vaughan: Yeah, I hear this all the time from our health services, our police services, that they don't liaise their... well, the line departments over them don't liaise, so, I mean, I'm involved in something in...

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00:55:22.080 --> 00:55:40.270

Barry Vaughan: prosecution reform, and the police are saying, well, you know, I can do... because this audit, I can give 100 police officers are... well, or I can put 100 police officers on the street. What do you think I'm going to do? You know, so, we don't really, again, as Sally says, see it through their eyes, you know, and the sort of practical trade-offs they have to make that, you know.

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00:55:40.270 --> 00:55:45.480

Barry Vaughan: You know, a policy section within a particular department could insist on one thing, and they're not really aware of the, sort of.

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00:55:45.480 --> 00:55:56.619

Barry Vaughan: the operational trade-offs that practitioners will have to make. So, if we just factor those in, we just get much... well, you kind of preempt the messiness that then we have to try and deal with later.

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00:55:56.850 --> 00:56:03.979

Will Lockhart: Yeah. I mean, Barry, you're back at your point around Danish co-design, right? Like, you know, if you're delivering something, get those people into the room, you know.

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00:56:03.980 --> 00:56:07.369

Sally Washington: I understand when you use co-design and when you don't, because...

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00:56:07.370 --> 00:56:08.150

Will Lockhart: Well, that's... yeah.

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00:56:08.150 --> 00:56:23.720

Sally Washington: And that's the whole point about engagement, to the point of co-design or co-delivery. You have to understand how much agency... how much power you're giving up, because if you're not prepared to give up the power, don't even think about a co-design or a co-delivery.

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00:56:24.350 --> 00:56:41.270

Will Lockhart: All right, well, I'm a little disappointed to say it, but we are drawing close to time. I feel like I want this to go on a lot longer. Maybe we'll just have to do it again soon. So, I'd like everyone, please, to join me in giving Sally and Barry a huge virtual round of applause. That was brilliant. Huge thanks to all of you.

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00:56:41.270 --> 00:57:06.199

Will Lockhart: We're just gonna do a quick, poll. It sort of helps us improve, our, content. We'd love to see your responses. Just before you go, there's a couple more events that you can register to join us again soon. If you can't join live, remember that you can register for the event, and then the recording will be sent to your inbox. So we've got one coming up tomorrow, the Career Mapping Toolkit, which will

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00:57:06.200 --> 00:57:27.940

Will Lockhart: help you navigate the, complex pathways of career progression in government. I think that's, complex pathways is very nice. We've got our next session of our AI Skills Lab, AI for Time Management, on AI hacks for managing repetitive tasks. And in the last event of, 2025, we'll be exploring how to use data to tell better stories.

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00:57:27.950 --> 00:57:51.039

Will Lockhart: That's all we've got time for today. Thanks for those results in that poll, that's wonderful, and I think a ringing endorsement of our amazing speakers. Huge thanks to them.

We really hope you found it helpful. I know that you've all got busy days, some of you have got busy evenings or busy nights, so grateful that you spent the time with us. If you would like to receive some of those materials, hop into the community, comment on the post.

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00:57:51.040 --> 00:58:02.040

Will Lockhart: You'll have an email coming your way as well with the recording and some resources. I think that's all I'll say to you right now. It's, nearly 11pm here.

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00:58:02.040 --> 00:58:06.029

Will Lockhart: I suspect I'm gonna go to bed, I don't know about you, Barry, but .

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00:58:06.030 --> 00:58:07.820

Sally Washington: I read your mug of haulocks, Will.

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00:58:07.820 --> 00:58:17.649

Will Lockhart: Sounds very English, doesn't it? Anyway, it's been a total delight. Thanks so much, everybody, for listening. Huge thanks, Sally and Barry. Talk soon, everyone. Bye. Thanks.

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00:58:18.350 --> 00:58:19.470

Sally Washington: Kakite!