

IRSPM Annual Conference, WELLINGTON, 16-18 April 2019

PANEL: Expertise and Evidence-informed Policy-making

Convenors:

Brian Head, University of Queensland: brian.head@uq.edu.au

Alec Fraser, University of London: Alec.Fraser@lshtm.ac.uk

Theme overview:

There is international interest in the relationship between expert knowledge and the concerns of policy makers and public managers. Much of this interest has focused on efforts to promote more evidence-informed policies and evaluations within specific policy areas (e.g. education, healthcare, environment). There have also been some attempts to develop conceptual schemas to facilitate comparisons across cases and countries.

There is now a recognised need for systematic research on how expertise and research are utilised in different policy areas, and across different policymaking processes and institutional settings. This panel provides a forum for developing and sharing comparative research experiences on the relationship between expertise, research, policy and practice across policy themes, across institutional settings, and across national boundaries.

Systemic obstacles to adoption of expert knowledge are well-known. These include the politicised context of policy debates and governmental commitments, the search for political compromises, low awareness of evaluation findings on the part of public officials; and ineffective communication by researchers and other experts. ‘Bridging’ and ‘brokering’ strategies have emerged to promote closer linkages.

Papers are welcome on any topic aiming to enhance conceptual and/or empirical understanding of how expertise is mobilised or utilised in public policy settings. Some relevant questions might include:

1. How do the relationships between expertise and policy differ across policy issues, sectors or countries?
2. What strategies are used to promote or embed expertise in policy processes?
3. What conceptual models are useful for framing these analyses?
4. What are the research gaps?