Communicating

Planning for dissemination should be an integral part of research funding

Communication is a continual two-way flow of information – messages driven by audience

Aim to use multiple channels and formats of communication – need to be contextual

Policy makers defined broadly

Advocacy by a multitude of actors

Format, timing and language are critical

Learn from previous good practice

Utilising

Who are the policy makers?
- ever changing at high level; work at all levels

Need to encourage culture of evidence based practice

What is policy?

Need to work with all levels of policy and communities - *including communities as a resource – not PC stuff*

Academics need to recognise the need for participating dissemination

– publication in journals is not enough

Don't know much about policy makers – why aren't they knocking at researchers' doors?

RESEARCHERS
There are a number of ways to improve access to researchers for policy makers, but researchers are not necessarily the best policy communicators – need for mediators

Impact

How important is it to establish causal impact?

How is objectivity maintained?

Evaluation shouldn't just focus on the positive.

Research should only be expected to change (impact upon) the things that it is designed and resourced to change

Impact assessment should focus on a project/programme's original purpose and aims and then seek to identify *added value and adverse impacts*

A *systems approach* is needed to achieve policy change – not just good quality research. Evidence based culture; capacity development; and appropriate

communication mechanisms
(primary, secondary and tertiary)

It's not only about evaluating the
impact of *research*, but also the
impact of other parts of the system
required to support policy change