

Is it love at first sight
or a missed
connection?

Why do we keep
missing each other?

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Chief Science Adviser



Virtual Transport Research Colloquium, 26th November 2020

Ministry of Transport Outcomes



Inclusive access

Enabling all people to participate in society through access to social and economic opportunities, such as work, education, and healthcare.

Economic prosperity

Supporting economic activity via local, regional, and international connections, with efficient movements of people and products.

Healthy and safe people

Protecting people from transport-related injuries and harmful pollution, and making active travel an attractive option.

Environmental sustainability

Transitioning to net zero carbon emissions, and maintaining or improving biodiversity, water quality, and air quality.

Resilience and security

Minimising and managing the risks from natural and human-made hazards, anticipating and adapting to emerging threats, and recovering effectively from disruptive events.



Chief Science Advisor



0.4 FTE secondment

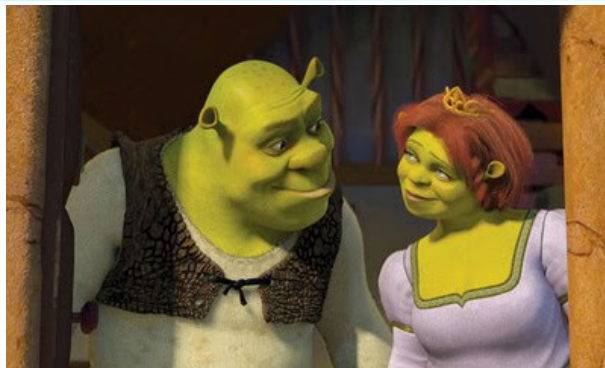
Based in Christchurch (Uni of Canterbury)

Purpose

- ▶ provide advice to the Ministry on areas that would benefit from scientific input
- ▶ champions the Ministry's use of evidence throughout the policy process and its development of wider sector strategies.



Love at first sight?



or a missed connection?



And what can/are we doing to improve the connection

Transport policy in NZ



There is a lot of transport policy being planned and implemented

- ▶ MoT, Waka Kotahi (NZTA), Local Authorities
 - ▶ Plus by non-transport sector e.g. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Infrastructure Commission, MfE, Climate Change Commission, Treasury, MBIE etc

Evidence based policy



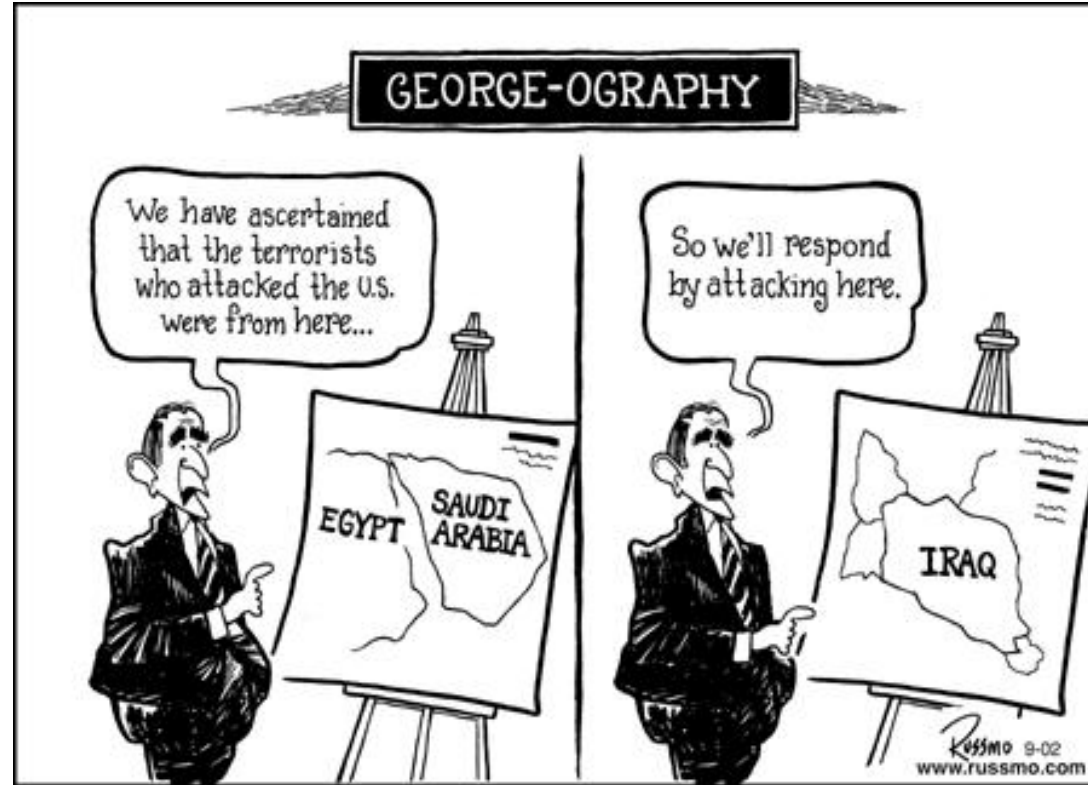
Good evidence base

.. leading to ... good policy

But this doesn't always happen

► Why not?

Researchers and policy makers
not always well linked



Why don't researchers engage better



They are busy

They don't know who to talk to

- ▶ MoT website not hugely helpful

There are few rewards for engaging

- ▶ Journal articles
- ▶ Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF)

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

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

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



They are often introverts

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

Why don't policy makers engage better?



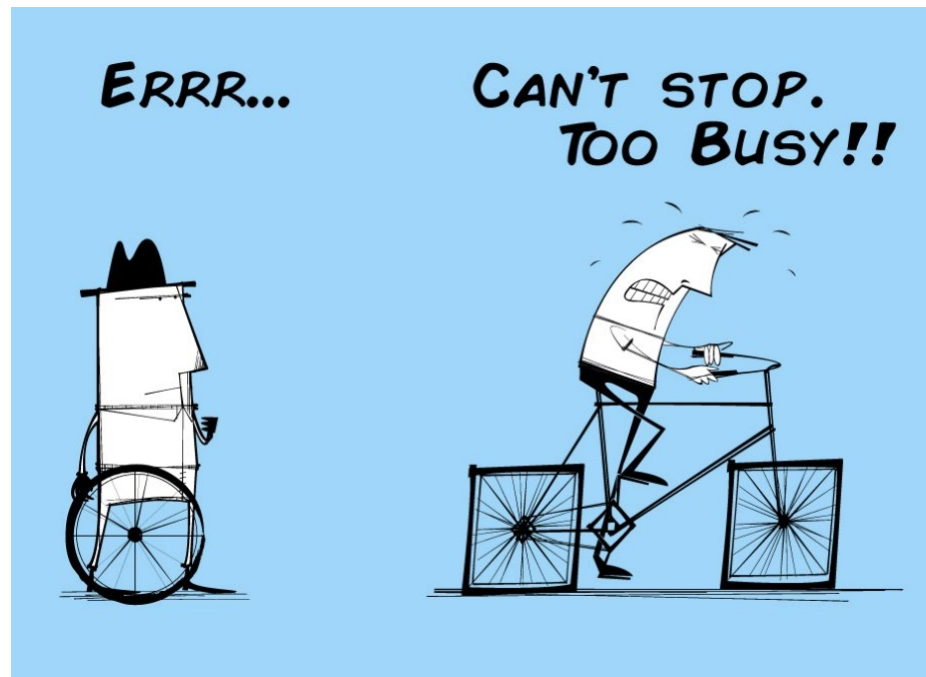
They are busy

They don't know who to talk to

- ▶ Hidden in all sorts of places
- ▶ Not always obvious who are experts

Academic literature is often hard to read

- ▶ Jargon
- ▶ Technical
- ▶ Theoretical
- ▶ Irrelevant



Why should we engage?

See research *actually* inform policy

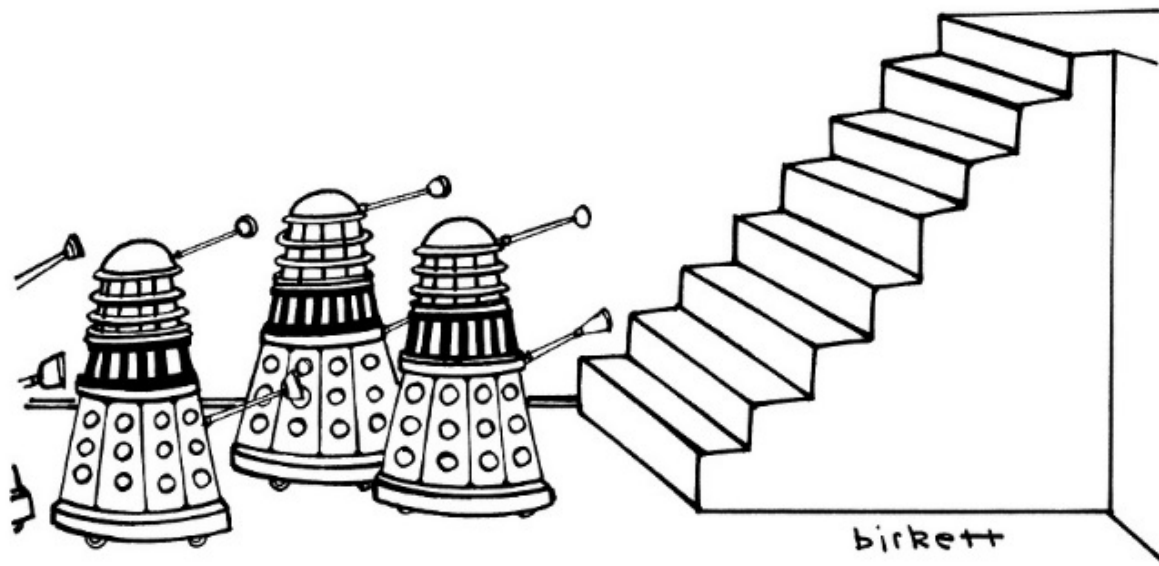
- ▶ Not just journal articles and PBRF scores

Make a difference

Moral responsibility?

- ▶ Tax payer funded

To avoid missing the obvious



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

Transport Evidence Base Strategy



- ▶ *Ensuring the transport sector has the right data, information, research and evaluation to deliver an evidence-based transport system that improves wellbeing and liveability*
- ▶ *gives us a common understanding of the long-term questions for transport and means we have an agreed framework for prioritising and investing in the right data, information, statistics, analytics, and research initiatives*
- ▶ *Includes - Domain Plan, Research Strategy and Evaluation Strategy*

<https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/transport-evidence-base-strategy/>

Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri o Aotearoa New Zealand Government

Transport Knowledge Hub

THE NEW ZEALAND TRANSPORT EVIDENCE BASE STRATEGY





Progress on implementing Research Strategy initiatives

- ▶ [Research Register](#) – contains information on research projects currently underway or recently completed and is updated periodically.
- ▶ [Transport Intelligent Digest](#) – quarterly publication with a summary of transport-related research, data articles and relevant releases from New Zealand and around the world. This is emailed to hub members and available online.
- ▶ Events:
 - ▶ [Transport Knowledge Conference 2019](#) – *theme Transport's contribution to wellbeing and liveability, attended by over 200 representatives from government, private sector, NGO's and academia.*
 - ▶ [Transport Research Colloquium 2019/2020](#) - *connect research and policy communities by providing an opportunity to meet and share insights on transport topics of contemporary importance to New Zealand.*

Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Sector Research Program



- ▶ *Through its Sector Research Programme, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency invests in innovative and relevant (land-transport) research which plays a critical role in contributing to the government's goals for transport.*
- ▶ *Research must be readily applicable to interventions that can be cost effectively applied in New Zealand in the short-to-medium term for longer term impacts.*

Recent developments

- ▶ *More agile*
- ▶ *More flexible timing*

Transport Knowledge Hub (TKH)



- ▶ brings people together to implement Transport Evidence Base Strategy (TEBS)
- ▶ aims for data, information, research & evaluation (DIRE) to deliver evidence-based transport system
- ▶ enables communication and collaboration for people to share DIRE
- ▶ provides a way to identify and close future knowledge and research needs
- ▶ organising regular seminars and other events to promote the sharing of DIRE
- ▶ promoting cross-sector collaboration through special interest Topic Hubs

<http://www.knowledgehub.transport.govt.nz/>

Transport Knowledge Hub (TKH)



- ▶ Feed into priorities
 - ▶ *Environment Hub as the exemplar*
- ▶ Disseminate findings
 - ▶ *Increasingly able to be delivered and viewed online*
 - ▶ *Face to face not just in Wellington*
- ▶ Engage with the sector e.g. MoT, NZTA
 - ▶ *Break out sessions!*
 - ▶ *TKH Webinar series (30 Nov – 4 Dec) – replaces the Transport Knowledge Conference in 2020*

Scholarships



MAY 2020

Scholarships awarded

In 2020, we awarded 6 graduate research scholarships to help outstanding students to complete research in fields deemed important to New Zealand's transport sector.

The successful recipients were:

- Alice Evans, University of Canterbury.
Research topic: Assessment of tsunami risk, exposure and evacuation capacity of remote coastal communities on the lower East Coast of the North Island, New Zealand.
- Lucy Groenhart, University of Auckland.
Research topic: Valuing the costs and benefits of active mobility: A case study in Māngere, Auckland.
- Sienna MacArthur-Beadle, University of Otago
Research topic: An educational narrative intervention targeting children's pedestrian safety around railway level crossings.
- Lily McSweeney, University of Canterbury.
Research topic: Scenarios for incentivising use of alternative transport in New Zealand: Travel demand management in Wellington and Christchurch.
- Yvonne Mitchell, University of Otago.
Research topic: Perspectives of young New Zealanders on driver licensing and road safety.

Fred Smithers, University of Auckland

Research topic: Investigating the relationship between changes to urban density and transport patterns in Auckland since 2000: An in-depth analysis.

~~2021~~

Chief Science Advisor



Contact me

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Thank you

