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# The benefits of a RIS in building the evidence base for policy proposals Video Transcript

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**Neil Savery:** If you jump to conclusions, if you haven't got your evidence base, you could well find that you formulate a regulatory position that is expensive, it's difficult to actually implement, and at the same time, it's not actually hitting the mark to solve the problem.

Knowing what your problem is, in the first instance, is critical in formulating your options and your policy outcomes.

**Kate Carnell:** First of all, you've got to determine who the target audience is for the RIS.

Of course, its elected representatives and those elected representatives, those members of Cabinet that have to make decisions on a wide range of things in a reasonably limited period of time, need to have the information, both positive and negative, that will help them make those decisions are under pressure in cabinet, when decisions are needing to be made quickly.

What Members of Parliament want, what ministers want, and I've been there myself, is they really need to know not just what a particular bill, legislation, regulation does.

That's simple enough to have a look at, but what the stakeholders think about it and what the impact is going to be, of this particular legislation or regulation.

Most importantly, they need both the positive and the negative. In fact, you know, regularly the negative is a whole heap more important.

As a Government, you're already thinking, this is a good thing to do. That's the reason the legislation or regulation is, you know, in front of Cabinet. What you need to know in a regulatory impact statement is what the impact is going to be on various parts of the community that are going to be affected by the legislation.

From the small business perspective, you need to know if this is going to dramatically increase regulation or time, or it's going to really cause problems for the small business sector.

That doesn't mean you won't support the legislation. It just means that you know what the downside is likely to be.

And that's desperately needed when you're in that cabinet situation.

**John Skerritt:** It's important in looking at regulatory options, to identify what you're trying to fix so often, it will be easy to say, well, there's a symptom here.

We have a problem with a particular sector that is either not complying or we have a risk of safety, for example, if it's a health regulation.

Very often symptomatic issues, and one of the advantages of doing a regulation impact statement and reflecting on the policy process is actually getting to the root cause of the issue.

It may be better in terms of economic efficiency and also in terms of social impacts to actually try to look at treating the root cause rather than necessarily addressing a symptom.

It also gives you a more durable policy solution.

**Mark Booth:** I've been involved in policy development now as a policy professional for many, many years, far too many years than I care to remember.

And I've done it in four different countries around the world.

The key problem that I've always found in every one of those countries is problem definition. How do you really define what it is that you're looking at?

You have to define what the problem is. Otherwise, if you don't, you can go down a myriad of different rabbit holes trying to come up with answers, which may seem logical at the time.

At the end of the project, you suddenly find you don't actually understand the problem that you're trying to look at in the first place.