



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Melbourne School of
Government

A Crisis of Expertise?

Legitimacy and the challenge of policymaking

At a time when the economic, social and environmental governance challenges facing contemporary societies have grown in severity, scope and complexity, trust in experts and established institutions is in decline. In the process the role and legitimacy of expertise in policymaking has increasingly been called into question.

It is timely to think anew, and self-critically, about our assumptions regarding experts and expertise. In this two-day conference our focus is on policymaking which is controversial, contested and complex, which is sociotechnical and not simply technical or purely scientific. In particular we explore three themes and how they manifest in practical policymaking.

Knowledge & Society: what constitutes scientific and social scientific expertise, how is it produced and reproduced, and what knowledge/s and technologies of expertise are deployed? When and why do experts get it wrong? When it comes to making policy, what assumptions and problem-framings are prevalent, which experts and what expertise is recruited, and how are knowledge gaps and ignorance handled. What publics matter?

Policy in Practice: what does the 'crisis of expertise' mean for thinking and re-thinking policymaking in practice? Is the 'crisis of expertise' a problem of democracy or does it go beyond this? What evidence counts, how is expert knowledge communicated, what is the role of science advisors, in-government experts, public and experiential expertise and public engagement in policymaking? When does policymaking 'work' and when does it 'fail', and why? And, given increasing specialisation, what is the role of inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches

Innovation and Experimentation: What innovative approaches to policymaking and expertise hold the most promise? These might include the promise and perils of greater public participation and democratisation of policymaking, or the use of citizen science, citizen juries, aggregative expertise, crowd wisdom, practical knowledge, indigenous knowledge and so on. What might be learned from policy-making in the global 'South'?

This conference aims to include leading thinkers and policy practitioners both locally and globally. It is designed to be relatively small in size to enable all attendees to participate actively.



15 February 2018

9.30am-6.00pm
Conference Dinner

16 February 2018

9.00am-4.00pm

VENUE:

Arts West, Forum Theatre
University of Melbourne

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Professor Andy Stirling
(SPRU, University of Sussex)
Professor Sheila Jasanoff
(Harvard Kennedy School)

Registration deadline:
15 January 2018

Enquiries:
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Registration:
\$150 Full Price
\$50 Student Concession

For more information, visit www.government.unimelb.edu.au