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# **HOW CAN ECONOMICS INFORM SOCIAL POLICY?**

Professor Gail Pacheco

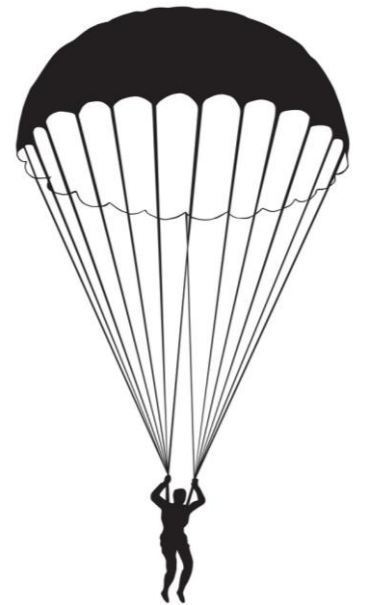
Auckland University of Technology

ACE 15 July 2019



# Evidence Informed Policy Making

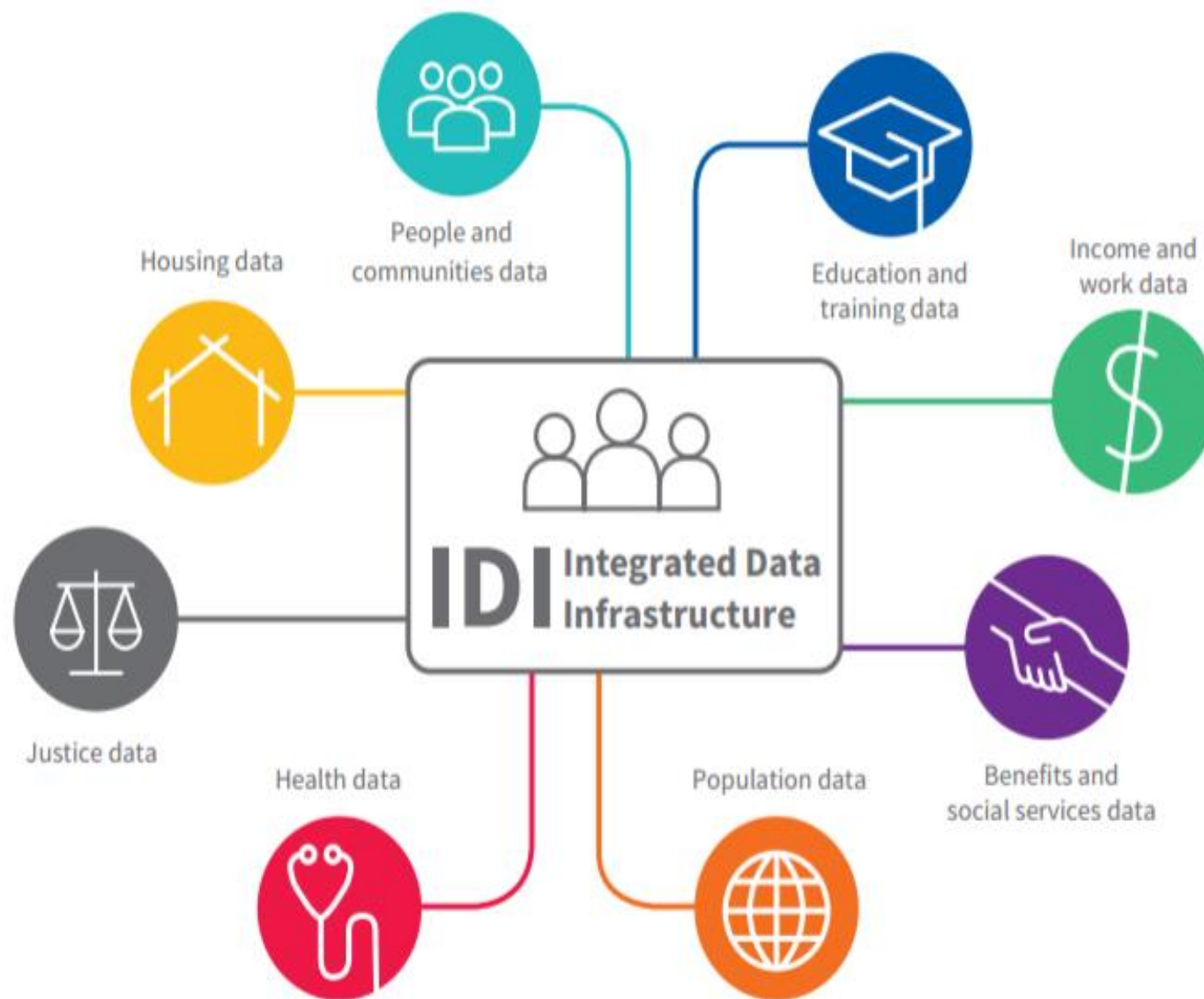
- Interface between **science** and **policy** but ALSO **science** and **society**
- While there are many other factors at play, policy decisions and direction MUST be informed by **robust evidence**.
- Rise of ‘fake news’ debates is a worrisome trend – threat to trust in robust scientific approaches



*“moment-by-moment decisions come down to a mixture of **instinct** and **advice**”*

- Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

# Big Data

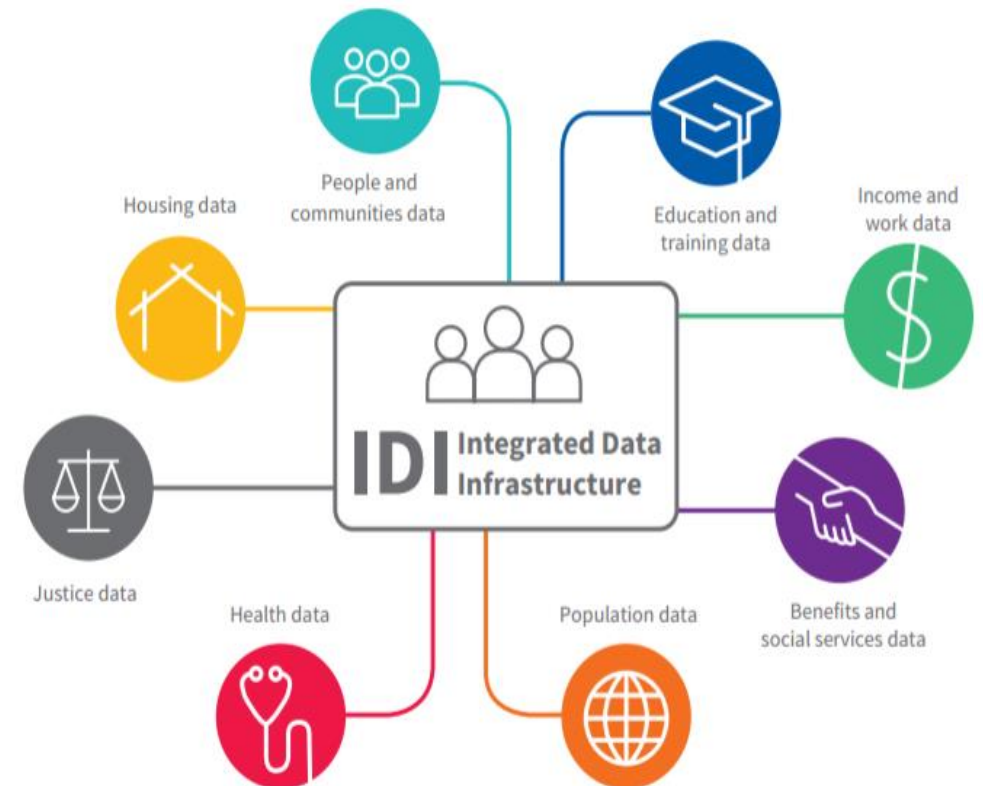


# Big Data

- 1) Selection and stewardship of data
- 2) Uniformity across the data collection agencies
- 3) Misconception that bigger data is better – not always
- 4) Misinterpretation is rife in the social sciences
- 5) Predictive risk models can be risky

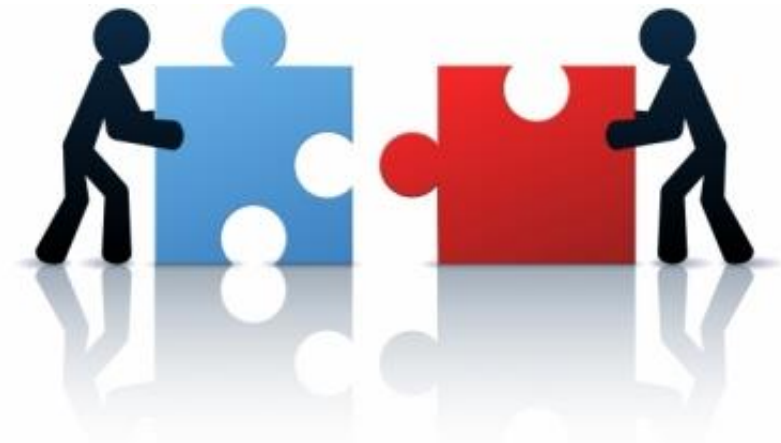
Lots of positives:

- ✓ **Greater evidence base** when used appropriately, and in consideration of the context.
- ✓ Particularly **useful**, when used in a complementary fashion with our evidence sources (e.g. qualitative).



# Brokerage

- Scientists are good at problem definition, not at finding policy-relevant solutions within an appropriate timeframe.
- Brokerage is an important facet of ensuring **alignment** between additions to the **scientific knowledge base** and **policy / practitioner community**.
- This implies:
  - A match is possible between the evidence base and policy target
  - Advice not haltered by predetermined biases or designed to support predetermined decisions
  - Just as strong an emphasis on what we don't know



# Engagement and translation

- **EARLY** contact is key
- **LINK** to specific policy goals or targets
- **SHARE** preliminary results and discuss extensions, revisions *etc.*
- **ENGAGE** stakeholders at both policy and practice levels
  - Be the interface between these groups
- Include policy implications and link to policy targets
- Clearly state caveats and extensions (may lead to new work)
- Present, meet, share with policy-makers and media

*“Coming together is a **beginning**; keeping together is **progress**; working together is **success**.”* – Edward Everett Hale

# Thank you



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