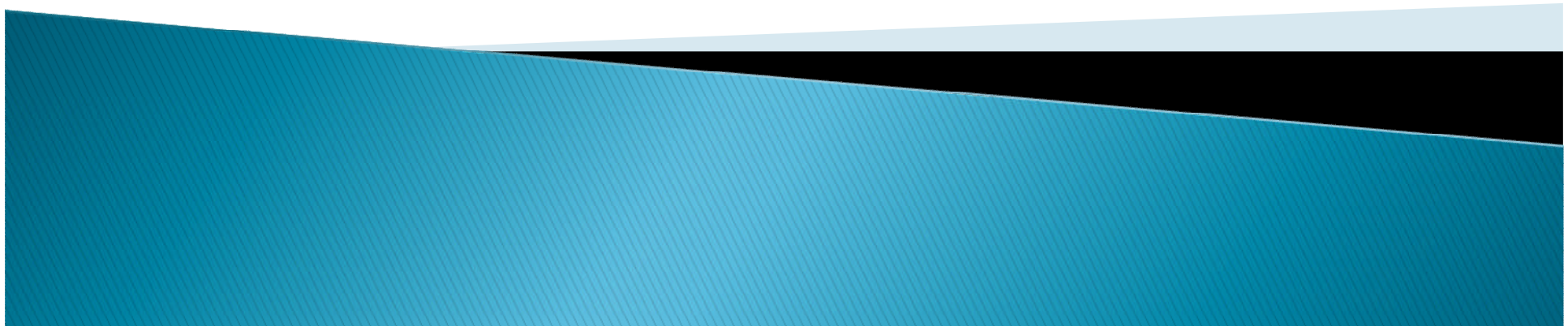


“Selective influence” – a staff perspective

Sarah Petit
Specialist, Home Affairs Committee



Surprising findings

- ▶ Volume of vague recommendations
 - 5% of bold text passages – not clear whether or not a recommendation is being made
 - 2% of recommendations – not clear who the recommendation is aimed at
 - 4% of recommendations – not clear what action is being requested
 - 14% of all recommendations are “immeasurable”
 - Flipside to consensual decision-making?



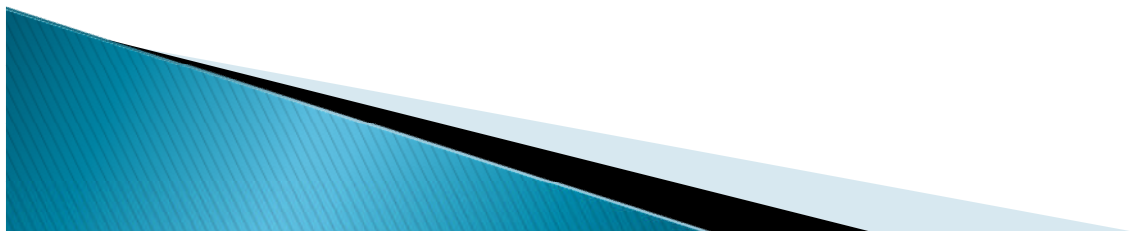
Surprising findings

- ▶ “No obvious relationship” between newspaper coverage and whether or not a recommendation is accepted or implemented
 - 45% of implemented recommendations had received no coverage, compared with 38% that had received some coverage
 - Ministers “more likely to react negatively or defensively” to committee reports
 - But: “how else will committees generate fear?”
 - Implications for our influencing strategies?



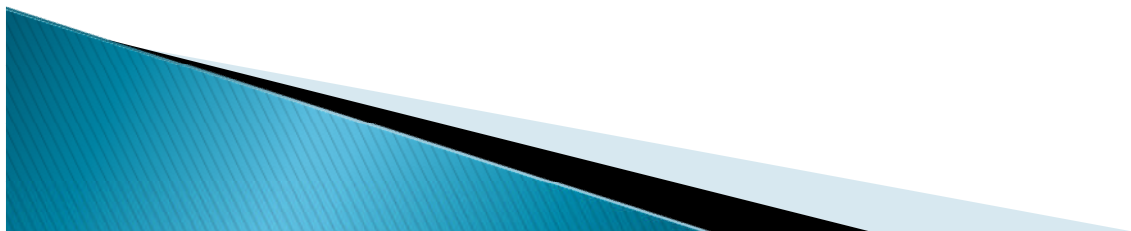
Surprising findings

- ▶ Impact of simply conducting an inquiry:
 - “The much bigger influence is the fear of having to appear in front of them”
 - “In a way reports are just a formality”
 - “If you were really cynical you wouldn’t do reports, just announce inquiries”
 - Evidence of policy announcements during the course of an inquiry



Expected findings

- ▶ Difficulty in judging whether or not recommendations have been accepted and/or implemented
 - Poor quality of Government responses
 - 2% of recommendations received no response
 - 24% of recommendations classed as “neither accepted nor rejected”
 - Letting them get away with it – only 3% of committee publications were a direct follow-up to Government responses (outlier – PASC 16%)



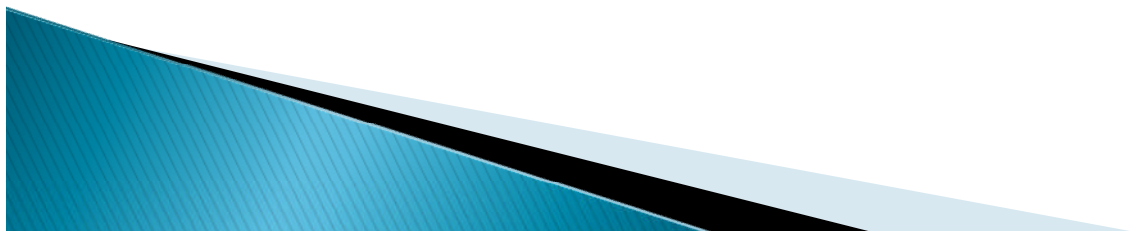
Expected findings

- ▶ Recommendations are more likely to be successful if they are either:
 - a) endorsing/embellishing existing policy
 - 68% of recommendations requesting small or no change were accepted (61% implemented)
 - 17% of recommendations requesting large change were accepted (21% implemented)
 - b) pursuing niche areas
 - “Setting hares racing”



Possible further research

- ▶ *Implementation rates over time*
- ▶ Committees are producing larger numbers of reports and recommendations
 - 1997–2001 152 reports
 - 2001–2005 131 reports
 - 2005–2010 222 reports
- ▶ Is there any relationship between quantity of output and level of influence?



Possible further research

- ▶ *Relationship between influence and who recommendations are aimed at*
- ▶ Only 26% of recommendations are *not* aimed at central government
- ▶ What does increased localism mean for the work of select committees?

