Australian Government
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Australia's IT tool for RIA oversight

Mathew Tolley, Adviser, Office of Best Practice Regulation, Australia

Background

- Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) sits within Federal Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet.

- Australian RIA system covers all Australian Federal Government Ministries and National/Sub-national decision making forums.

RIA in Australia

- All policy proposals require a RIA, until confirmed otherwise.

- A subjective assessment threshold for when RIA is required.

- Significantly volume (1,500 – 1,800) of proposals are assessed by OBPR each year.

What is the problem?

OBPR uses a legacy IT system developed in the early 2000s. Two key problems with the current system:

- Limits our efforts to engage and upskill the Australian Public Service in evidence-based policy making.

- Highly inefficient, with many manual steps that risk holding up major processes of Government.

What are we doing?

Implementing a new IT system

- Designing a bespoke IT system for a RIA oversight body.
- Uses the Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform.

Key objectives of the new system

- ✓ Improve the quality of our impact analysis advice.
- ✓ Enable better management of our workload.

How will the new system help?

Improve the quality of our impact analysis advice

What we currently do	What the new system will enable us to do
RIA assessment is good on a case-by-case basis, but difficult to see a wider perspective	Ability to see aggregate assessments by Ministry or topic allows us to better target training and upskilling.
Quality of RIA not captured systematically over time.	Quality assessment captured over time to show evidence of improvement.
While much information is captured, it is not easily searchable or categorised.	Search and categorisation features provide a valuable policy knowledge base.

How will the new system help?

Enable better management of our workload

What we currently do	What the new system will enable us to do
Many manual, purely administrative steps.	Automated steps reduce administration time and improve capture of important information.
Lack of notification or alerts for when things are due.	Notifications and alerts allow better prioritisation of work.
Teams do not have any system-based visibility of workload.	Dashboards provide better visibility of team capacity, helping to balance workload across the branch.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned in our project so far include:

- While internal workload improvements are important, build your business case around opportunities to improve impact analysis across Government.

- Have a good understanding of your own processes – but be willing to change!

- Ensure project is driven by the business unit, not IT.