The role of the media and politician and the use of evidence in the public debate about the need to streamline EIA in Australia

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Methodology

• Global - Search of Proquest database
  – Newspapers, magazines, podcasts, websites and blogs
    • i.e. no academic sources

• Australia
  – Curtin University library search of newspaper articles
  – Google search using “green tape”

• News sources should reflect contemporary concerns and political debate
Context – EIA in Australia

• Federal system
• Two layers of EIA
• National
  – Focus of matters of national environmental significance, including international treaties
• State
  – Broader environmental issues, but regional focus
Context

• Cutting green tape
  – One EIA process
  – National process carried out through State EIA process
1. Global
1960s-present
Streamlining in title and environment a topic
1960s-present
Streamlining in title and environment a topic extrapolated
“Cutting green tape”

- August 2006
- the Diggers and Dealers conference in Kalgoorlie
- Michael Kiernan, Consolidated Minerals Chief introduced the term “green tape”
1960s-present
Cutting Green Tape in title (Global)
1960s-present
Cutting Green Tape in title - extrapolated

- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
- 2000s
- 2010s extrapolated

(Bar chart showing data from 1970s to 2010s with extrapolated values for the 2010s.)
2. Australia newspapers
1960s-present
Cutting Green Tape in title (not Google)
Some initial analysis

- Reporting type

- Reporting pro cutting green tape only: 61.4%
- Reporting anti cutting green tape only: 8.6%
- Reporting both sides: 17.1%
- Opinion piece supporting cutting green tape: 7.1%
- Opinion piece opposing cutting green tape: 5.7%
“Flavour”

- Reports only supporting cutting green tape: 68.6%
- Reports only against cutting green tape: 17.1%
- Reporting both sides: 14.3%
Use of supporting data/information

- Reporting views only
- Using reports of secondary data

- 80%
- 20%
The data

• 2 – using indirect data of environmental decline (-);
• 2 – using a Productivity Commission Report (+);
• 2 – a case study of pollution linked to de-regulation (-);
• 1 – survey of business leaders (+);
• 1 – a University report (+);
• 1 – unnamed report (+)
• 2 – money saved by not having to get an approval (+)
Implications

• Relevant data and information not central to debate
• All + reporting focused on cost of assessments (upfront costs) not cost getting it wrong (post approval)
• The political debate (both sides) supports cutting green tape
• Those against are academics and the political ‘Left’
• Reporting
  – Primarily pro cutting green tape
  – Not a balanced public debate
• This is the political reality
Responses

- Enter the debate
- Find ways to work with the political reality