Clear Horizon

Developmental Evaluation and Value for Investment: A new pathway for complex systems change

AES 2026



Regional Stewardship

"There is … a great and pressing need to strengthen the current arrangements if the trust and confidence of the Australian community in the government's stewardship of the aged care system is to be rebuilt and maintained… ***Stewardship requires a governance system that is characterised by active engagement*** *to ensure that the aged care system is the very best that it can be."*

(Royal Commission, 2021, p. 87)

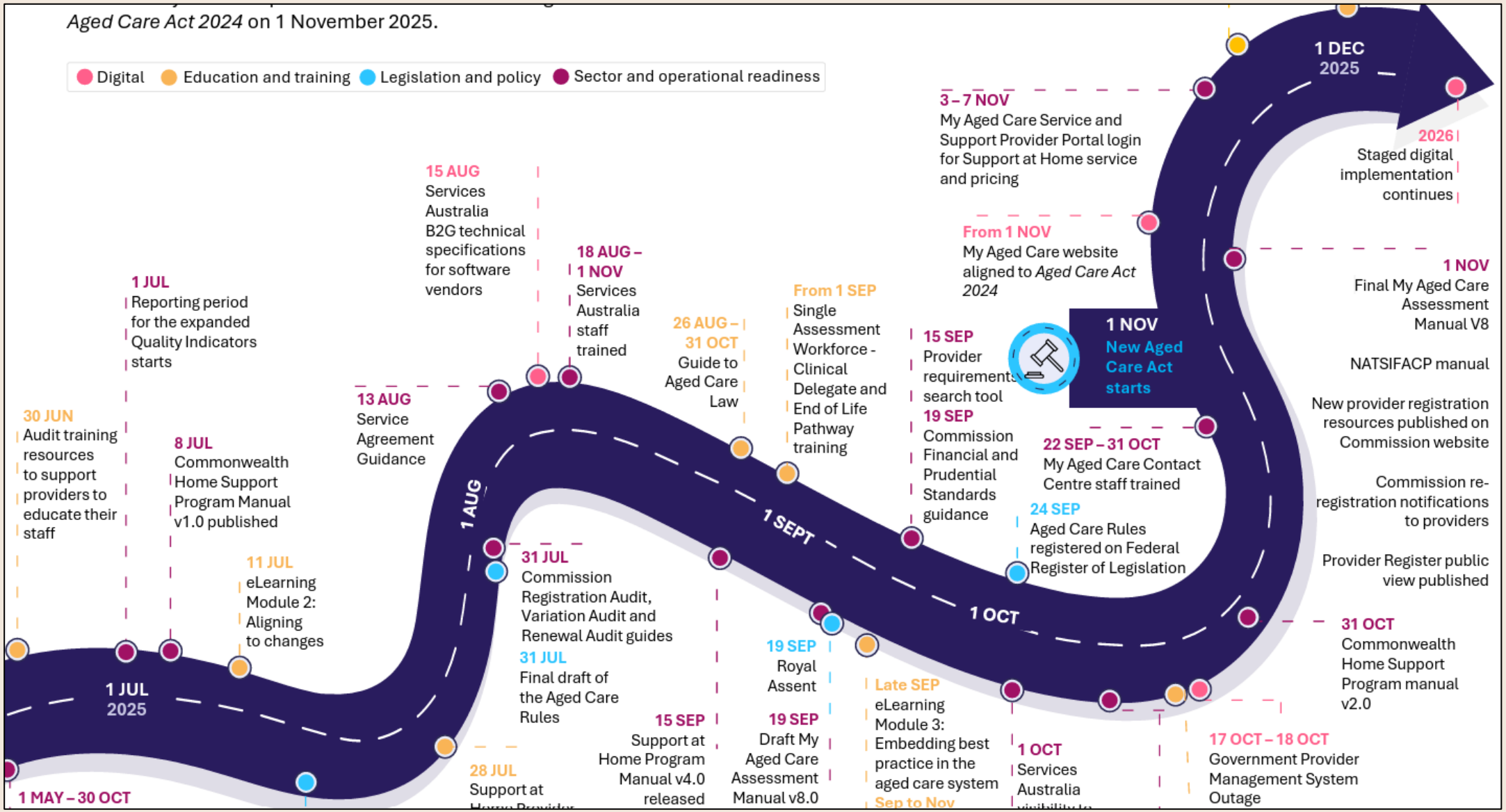


Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Stewardship

Providers and other Actors

Older people & communities


Aged Care Act 2024 on 1 November 2025.
Digital
Education and training
Legislation and policy
Sector and operational readiness
1 JUL 2025
1 AUG
1 SEPT
1 OCT
1 NOV
1 DEC 2025
1 MAY – 30 OCT
30 JUN
Audit training resources to support providers to educate their staff
1 JUL
Reporting period for the expanded Quality Indicators starts
8 JUL
Commonwealth Home Support Program Manual v1.0 published
11 JUL
eLearning Module 2: Aligning to changes
13 AUG
Service Agreement Guidance
15 AUG
Services Australia B2G technical specifications for software vendors
18 AUG – 1 NOV
Services Australia staff trained
28 JUL
Support at
31 JUL
Commission Registration Audit, Variation Audit and Renewal Audit guides
31 JUL
Final draft of the Aged Care Rules
15 SEP
Support at Home Program Manual v4.0 released
26 AUG – 31 OCT
Guide to Aged Care Law
From 1 SEP
Single Assessment Workforce - Clinical Delegate and End of Life Pathway training
19 SEP
Royal Assent
19 SEP
Draft My Aged Care Assessment Manual v8.0
Late SEP
eLearning Module 3: Embedding best practice in the aged care system
Sep to Nov
15 SEP
Provider requirements search tool
19 SEP
Commission Financial and Prudential Standards guidance
1 OCT
Services Australia
24 SEP
Aged Care Rules registered on Federal Register of Legislation
22 SEP – 31 OCT
My Aged Care Contact Centre staff trained
1 NOV
New Aged Care Act starts
3 – 7 NOV
My Aged Care Service and Support Provider Portal login for Support at Home service and pricing
From 1 NOV
My Aged Care website aligned to Aged Care Act 2024
17 OCT – 18 OCT
Government Provider Management System Outage
31 OCT
Commonwealth Home Support Program manual v2.0
1 NOV
Final My Aged Care Assessment Manual V8
NATSIFACP manual
New provider registration resources published on Commission website
Commission re-registration notifications to providers
Provider Register public view published
2026
Staged digital implementation continues

How do you evaluate something that is still developing while also judging whether it represents good public investment?



How do you evaluate something that is still developing while also judging whether it represents good public investment?

While everything is changing!



Bridging Developmental Evaluation and Value for Investment

Developmental Evaluation

An approach that supports innovation, adaptation, and continuous learning in complex and dynamic environments.

Patton, M., & Patton. C. (2026, forthcoming). Developmental Evaluation, 2nd edition Guildford Press.

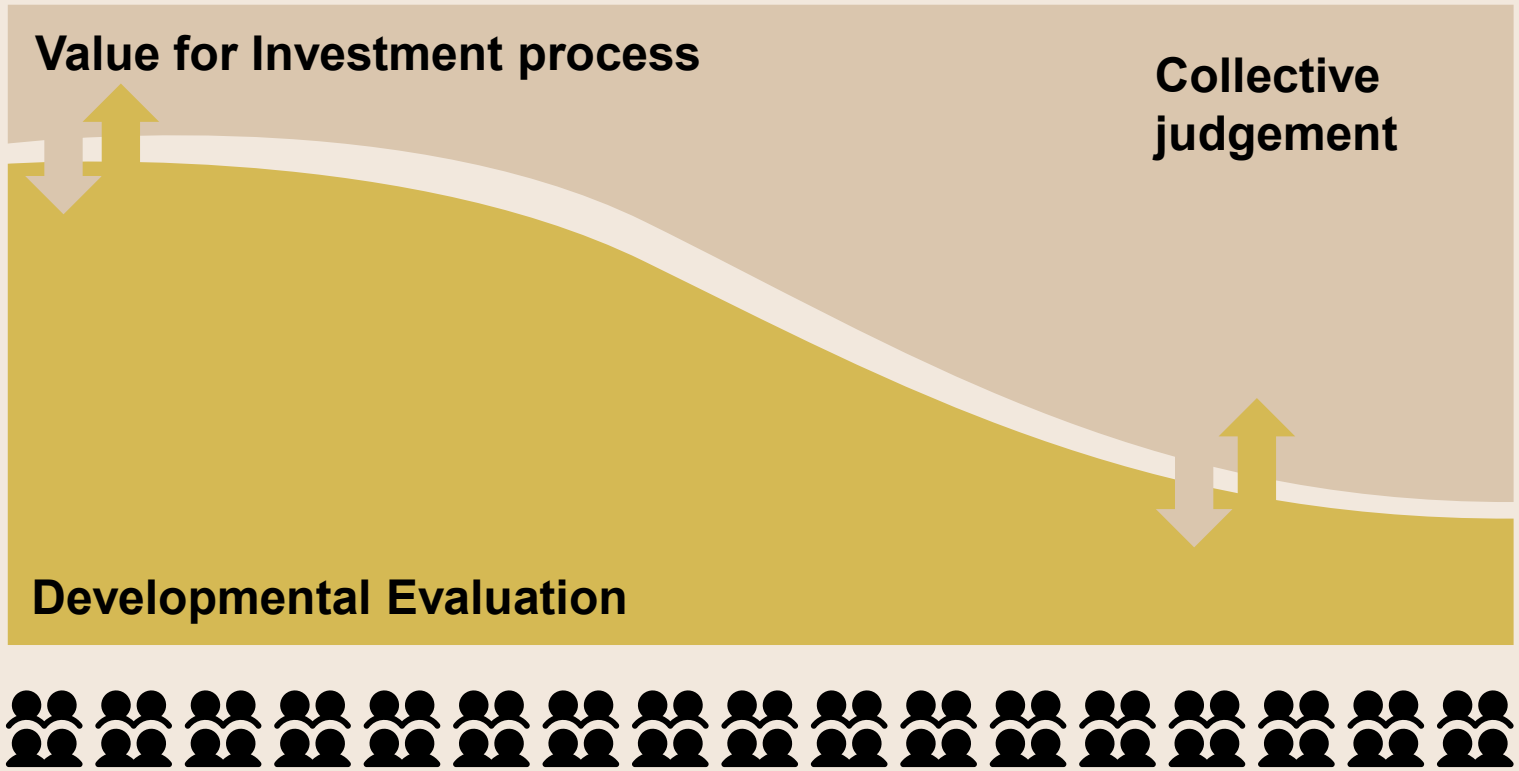
Complexity-aware Value for Investment

Rigorous way of determining how well resources are used in public policy and social investment, whether that use creates enough value, and how more value can be created

- Peterson, 2026. Value for money on rough ground: Rethinking economic evaluation for complex and systems-change initiatives. University of Bath.
- King, J. (2019). Evaluation and value for money: Development of an approach using explicit evaluative reasoning [University of Melbourne].

DE meets VFI Arc

What is it? How well is it going? Is it worth it?



1. Discover and build relationships
2. Understand Stewardship - *Logic Model*
3. Agree what Value for Investment looks like – *Value propositions/Rubric*
4. Gather, synthesise and make sense of evidence
5. Feed-back as you go, learn and adapt
6. Test and refine – *Rubric*
7. Collectively make judgements

Value Creation Logic Model

Creating overall value and equity for older people and their families, First Nations people, providers and policy makers relative to the investment.

Each criteria has been rated as to whether it is:

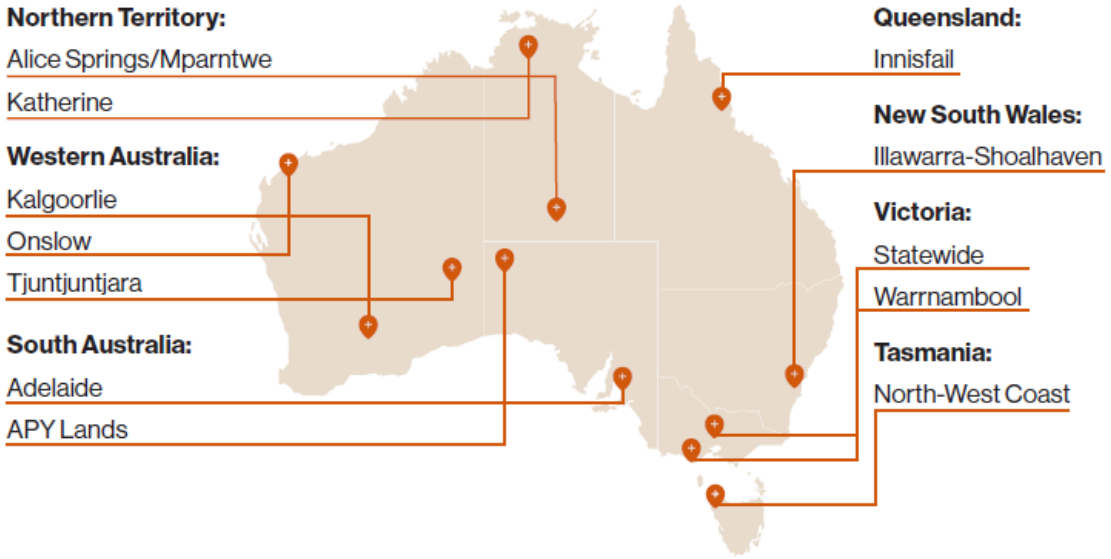
Not yet emerging | Emerging | Strengthening | Establishing

Levels	Domains of Value	Criteria			
Systems **Outcomes**	**Creating value through contributing to improvements in system reach, capability, integration and responsiveness.**	System reach: *Government engagement, coverage, and presence have grown locally. Providers, communities and First Nations people have access to relevant information, support and resources.*	System integration: *Better connections, coordination and interface between different levels of government and other services. Stronger relationships with communities and providers lead to improved aged care and emergency response.*	System capability: *Local Network staff, aged care providers and other organisations are better equipped to implement reforms, identify local issues, tailor responses and innovate. Local intelligence is used to better understand the needs of the sector and older people.*	System responsiveness: *Increased trust, flows of information and ability of the department to adapt and respond to local needs. Higher quality services in regional, rural and remote areas, improved transitions and pathways of care for older people. Increased agency for First Nations people.*
Stewardship **Practices**	**Creating value for systems change through stewardship practices.**	Solution brokering, problem solving and innovation.	Engaging across the sector and the wider system and building trust.	Capacity, capability-building and awareness raising.	Gathering, analysing and sharing intelligence, especially local voices.
Enablers **Culture and mindsets**	**Creating value for systems change through culture and mindset enablers.**	Thinking in systems.	Valuing relationships and interconnections.	Embracing learning and adaptation.	Putting the voices of older people at the centre.
Enablers **Conditions**	**Creating value by being a good steward of resources through the enabling conditions.**	Organisational structure and authorising environment.	Sufficient corporate support.	Engaged and capable workforce.	Clear strategy and planning.
Foundations **Investments**	**Creating value by investing in the right foundations for change.**	Leveraging existing policy and resourcing and investing $77.6 million to extend and expand the regional stewardship approach from January 2023 to December 2026 including additional staffing in the Local Network and central office, systems and tools, IT expenses, nine regional offices and developmental evaluation.			

Informed by: Peterson, H. (2025). Democratic deliberation as a north star: Showcasing a framework to assess the value for money of systems-change efforts. *Evaluation*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/13563890251386814

Mixed-methods data collection

Case studies



Primary data collection methods

Discovery consultations

155

Local Network APS staff participated in one-on-one and group discussions during the discovery phase.

Local Network Survey

2024

141

Local Network respondents.

63%

2025

107

Local Network respondents.

48%

Local Network Director interviews

2024

12

Executive Level 2 staff.

2025

16

Executive Level 2 staff.

Senior Executive Service staff interviews

2024

11

Senior Executive Service Band 1 staff.

2025

20

Senior Executive Service Band 1 staff.

Central Office Director interviews

8

Executive Level 2 staff.

Deep dives

3

deep dives generated through interviews with Local Network staff.

Secondary data collection methods

Literature review

76

peer reviewed articles.

9

grey literature related to system stewardship in health and aged care governance.

Administrative data

10

departmental datasets informed national-level trends monitoring.

Stakeholder and Emergency Management Solution (SEMS)

4,308

interactions logged between 1 October 2024 and 30 August 2025.

Local Network Quarterly Reports

42

quarterly reports.

217

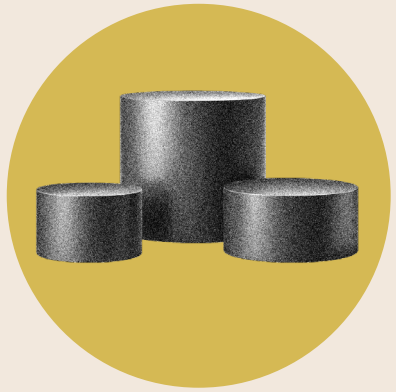
activities mapped to stewardship practice categories and intermediate outcomes.

Service Delivery Division Communications

20

instances of impact from fortnightly newsletters.

The evidence won’t judge itself



Data and rubrics



Analysis and Synthesis



Collaborative sensemaking



Democratic deliberation to reach judgements



Transparent reporting of agreement and divergence

Reflections

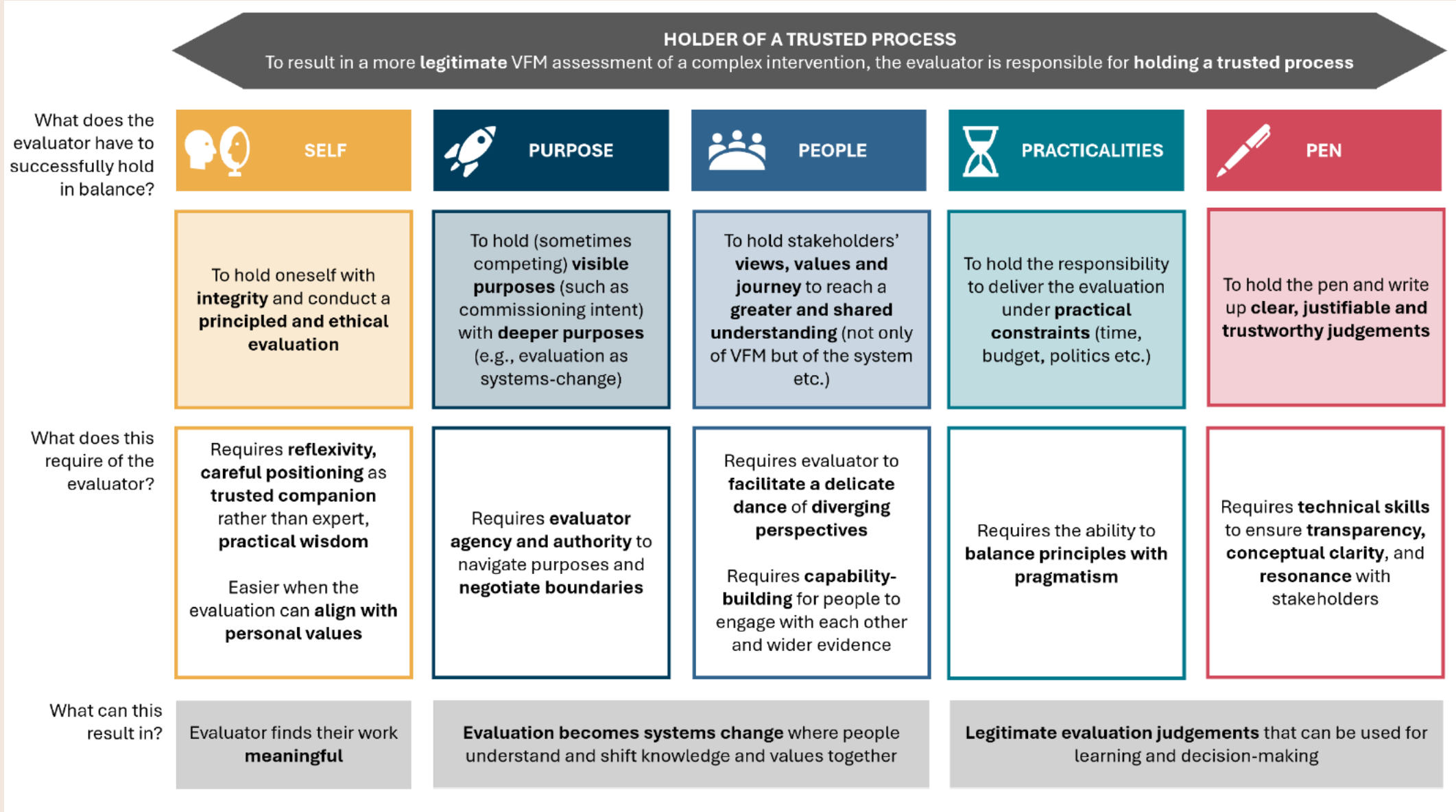
1. Start learning before you start judging

2. Bridge learning and judgement deliberately

3. Invest in a collective judgement-making process

4. Be open to shifting your role as an evaluator





Source: Peterson, 2026. Value for money on rough ground: Rethinking economic evaluation for complex and systems-change initiatives. University of Bath.

So how would you evaluate something that is still developing while also judging whether it represents good public investment?



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