



Evaluating evaluation capacity building in a large NGO

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Australia's first charity



The Benevolent Society (TBS)

- We are Australia's first charity
- We are an independent, non-religious organisation established in 1813
- Provide services to more than 40,000 people each year across NSW and QLD
- Services across the lifespan
- Commitment to research, evaluation and social policy

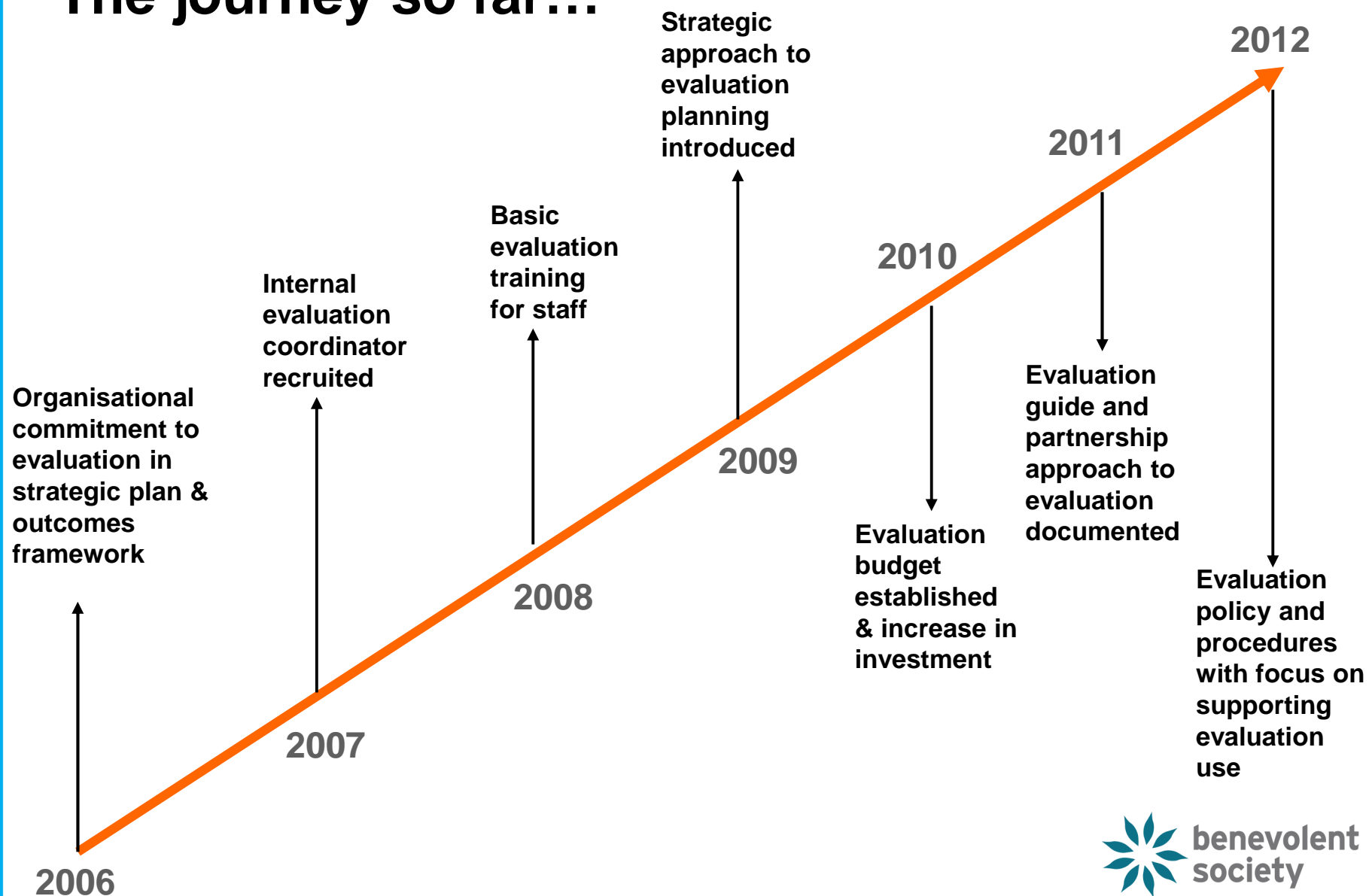


What is Evaluation Capacity Building?

“The ultimate goal of ECB is **sustainable evaluation practice** - where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyse and interpret data and **use evaluation findings for decision-making and action...** Sustainable evaluation practice also requires the development of **systems, processes, policies and plans that help embed evaluation work** into the way the organisation accomplishes its mission and strategic goals.”

(Preskill, H & Boyle, S, 2008)

The journey so far...



2010 Staff survey highlights

- 91% of staff agreed that evaluation is a vital part of a community service organisation
- 83% of staff agreed that The Benevolent Society is committed to evaluation
- 60% of staff agreed there is a culture of evaluation at The Benevolent Society



2010 Staff survey lowlights

- 35% thought that evaluation findings had been implemented
- 27% thought the program had changed the way it provides services to clients
- 31% were clear about how we do evaluation at TBS



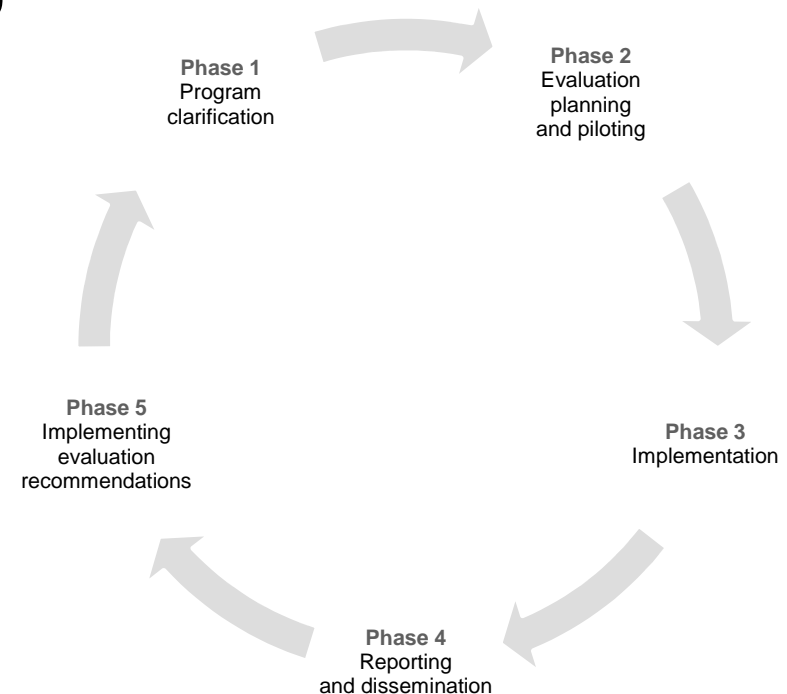
What we changed as a result

- Development of a guide to evaluation and evaluation policy and procedures
- Introduced a system to support and monitor implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Strengthened our partnership approach to evaluation



Evaluation policy and procedures

- Definition, purpose and guiding principles for evaluation
- Procedures for prioritising resources, planning, implementing and governance of evaluation projects
- Procedures for implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Roles and responsibilities



Practice Improvement Plan (PIP) process

- Introduced to support and systematically monitor implementation of evaluation recommendations
- Results workshop with staff to generate recommendations
- PIP template – Outcomes, targets, measures, activities
- Ongoing monitoring by teams and formal review at 6 & 12 months
- Report to Senior Executive Team

Evaluation of Brighter Futures

- Some striking results e.g.
 - clients exiting the program early
 - Lack of engagement from some client groups
- Development of Practice Improvement Plans with outcomes, targets and measures:
 - Increase the length of time clients remain on the program
 - Reduce the proportion of families exiting the program within 3 months
 - Increase number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families accessing the program
 - Increase the number of families achieving their Case Plan Goals

Evaluation of Brighter Futures

- After 12 months most targets had improved or been met
- 72% of staff reported finding the process useful in making improvements to the program

'It has been helpful to liaise and discuss with other teams what has and has not worked; reporting back on specific results has helped to maintain focus; the meetings have always lead to action plans'

Partnership approach to evaluation – community care

- Involving staff in evaluation
 - designing tools
 - collecting data
 - analysing results
- Ongoing feedback of results
- Impact of evaluation process on practice

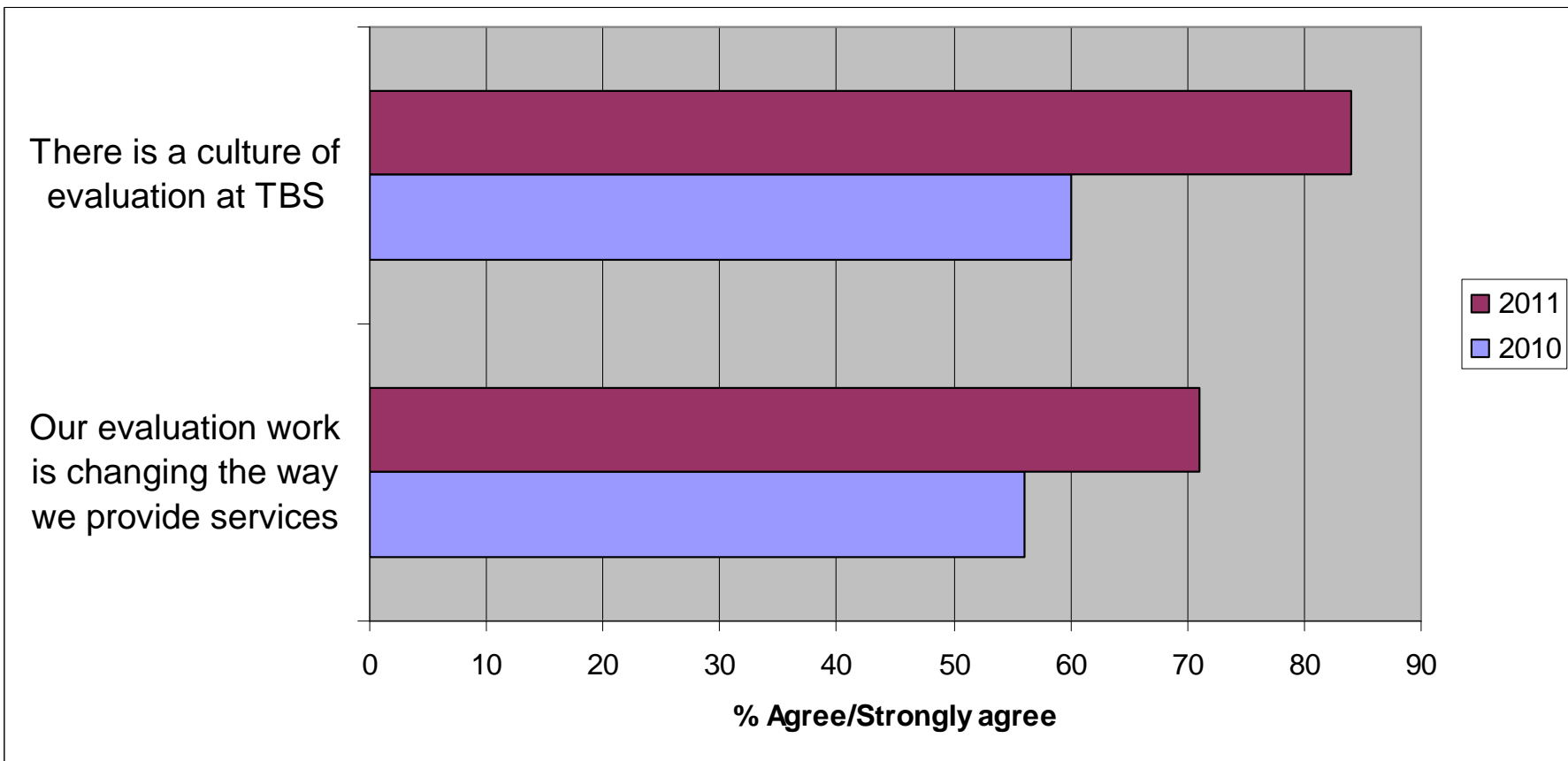


A word about data

- Lack of efficient and consistent data management systems at TBS
- Limited culture of monitoring or using data
- Poor quality data is the first reason not to use evaluation results



What's changed?



Barriers

- Data collection and systems
- Staff turnover
- Competing priorities
- Lack of accountability



What next?

- Reengaging Senior Executive Team in evaluation
- Developing long term plan for the next phase of ECB work
- Refining policy and procedures
- Working closely with the development of an electronic client management system to support ECB efforts

Remember...

- Evaluation capacity building requires time, resources and patience
- It's important to develop an evaluation policy and procedures
- Once you have your evaluation results the hard work starts - the implementation of evaluation recommendations needs to be supported and monitored
- Data management systems can make or break ECB efforts

Question time

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The Benevolent Society's work is only possible because of the compassion, determination and passion of our people, the financial support of our donors and the generosity of our volunteers.

