

# Harnessing Evaluation to Drive Innovation in the Health System

## Insights from Canada and Australia

Australasian Evaluation Society Conference 2016

**WEST WOOD  
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BETTER OUTCOMES ▶ BETTER LIVES

# Acknowledgement of Country

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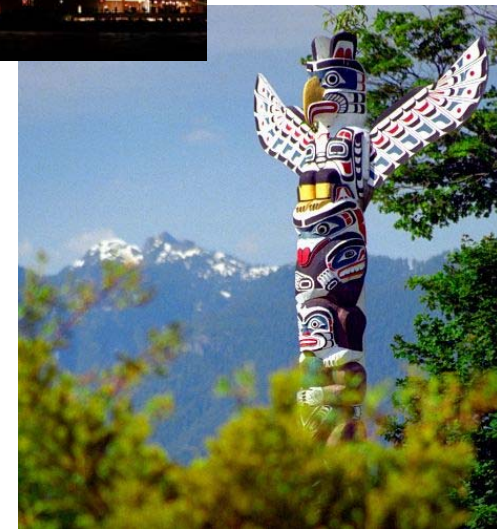
WestWood Spice acknowledges the traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

# Workshop purpose

To explore how evaluation can be used successfully to drive innovation in the health system

- Interactive session to:
  - Stimulate reflection
  - Generate insights for individual application
  - Co-create implications for evaluation practice
- Harness the brainpower in the room



# Workshop structure

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- Presentation of findings from two panels of veteran evaluators and evaluation users
- Interspersed with opportunities for reflection & discussion (group work)
- Brief round-table discussion of implications for practice:
  - For evaluators (internal & external)
  - For evaluation users / commissioners of evaluation

# A starting point: practice-based investigation in two similar (but different) contexts

## British Columbia, Canada



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## New South Wales, Australia



# The panels

## British Columbia (BC), Canada

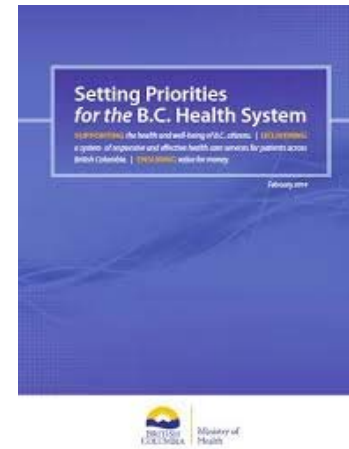
- Anne Baldwin
  - Change Management & Evaluation Specialist, Canada Health Infoway
- Bill Reid
  - BC Leader, Public Sector Consulting Services, MNP
- Fraser Bell
  - VP Planning & Quality, Northern Health
- James Coyle
  - Director, Health Systems Evaluation, Interior Health
- Victoria Schuckel
  - Acting ED, Research Knowledge Translation & Library Services, BC Ministry of Health, Research & Innovation Branch

## New South Wales (NSW)

- Chris Shipway
  - Acting Director, Clinical Program Design & Implementation, Agency for Clinical Innovation NSW Health
- Mel Miller
  - Director, Siggins Miller
  - Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, University of Queensland and Professor, Health Group, Griffith University
- Margaret Scott
  - Director, MCS Consultants
- Maura Boland
  - Director, The Insight Partnership

# Why does this conversation matter?

- Everyone's talking about innovation



# Some big questions

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Harnessing evaluation to *drive innovation* in the *health system*:

- What do we even mean by “*innovation*” in the health system?
- Does the context of innovation (i.e. the *health system*) matter?
- Lots of lip service to the vital role of evaluation, but is “*drive*” the right role? What can/should be expected of evaluation, and of us as evaluators?

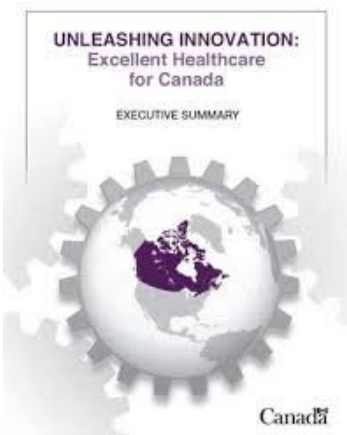
***How can we add most value?***



# What do we mean by “innovation” in the health system?

“Innovation has become a buzzword with varied meanings”

UNLEASHING INNOVATION: Excellent Healthcare for Canada  
Report of the Advisory Panel on Healthcare Innovation



“Activities **that generate value** in terms of quality and safety of care, administrative efficiency, the patient experience, and patient outcomes”



“In any organization there are different understandings. When I’m working with a program I want to know at a simple plain level **what’s new – new to the program although it may not be new overall.** It doesn’t need to be fancy.”

- BC Panellist



“If the proposed approach will bring transformative change rather than incremental continuous improvement, it is likely to be innovative”



“Changes to get you closer to better outcomes for patients, better efficiencies in the system and better population outcomes”

- NSW Panellist

# What does innovation in the health system mean in your context?

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(Table discussion)

- What does innovation mean in your context?
- Is there an agreed definition?
- Does it matter?



# Does the context of innovation matter?

- How complex is the system in which innovation is being sought?
- Who, or what is driving innovation?
- Where is innovation happening?

*“There is far more innovation created locally than there is centrally.”*

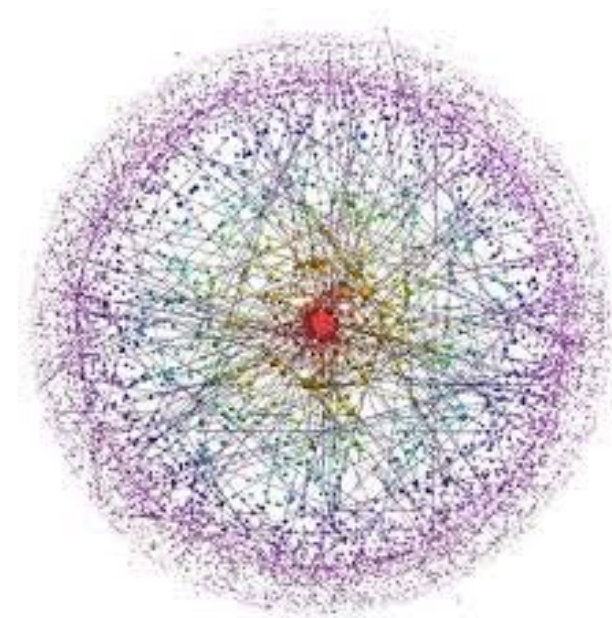
*- NSW panellist*

*“Up north and in the Maritimes – that’s where there’s the most innovation – they’re tiny and they’re poor so they need to be creative.”*

*- BC panellist*

*“I’m perplexed by what actually drives innovation in the health system.”*

*- NSW panellist*



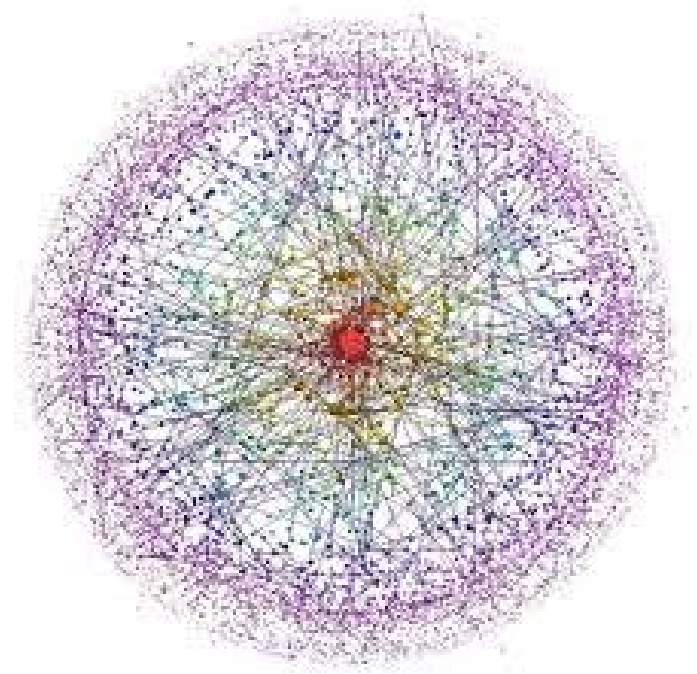
*“There is huge political pressure to evaluate against a range of criteria that it [the innovation] hasn’t a hope of achieving in the timeframe.”*

*- NSW panellist*

# Does the context matter?

## (Table discussion)

- What do you think about the panels' observations about the context of innovation in the health system?
- Is there anything unique about evaluation in this context vs other contexts?
- How does this affect the role & potential of evaluation?



## Slide 12

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**p7**

NOTE, we need to figure out how we are going to capture learnings. Here for example, do we ask someone in each group to take notes, so that we can have report back at the end?

penny, 14/09/2016

# Should evaluation drive innovation in the health system?

- Panellists were wary of “drive”

*“It suggests an autocratic, top-down approach through the hierarchy. That’s not really how innovation works for us.”*

*- BC panellist*



# What factors contribute to a powerful role for evaluation in supporting innovation in the health system?

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- Proximity
- Purpose
- Methodology
- Evaluator skills

Evaluation can have a powerful role in supporting innovation when ...

- There is a clear “line of sight” between activities & outcomes
  - Smaller scale innovation
  - Local / regional level implementation of a state/provincial innovation



Evaluation can have a powerful role in supporting innovation when ...

- A learning purpose is valued by the client
- Evaluation is embedded in planning cycle
  - Before commissioning a program/service
  - Use of evaluator analytical skills & tools to design the program (“an evaluative mindset”)

Evaluation can have a powerful role in supporting innovation when ...

- We use approaches suited to supporting innovation
  - Developmental
  - Mixed methods
  - Consumer involvement
- We have access to Big Data and data linkage
  - Can use for assessing intermediate outcomes

# Evaluator skills

Evaluation can have a powerful role in supporting innovation when the evaluators have:

- Political nous (i.e. situational & reflective practice competencies)
- Context knowledge (i.e. health system)
- Content knowledge (i.e. specific to the area of innovation)

# What factors limit evaluation's role?

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- Political / leadership barriers and decision cycles
- Innovation overload
- Timeframes
- The “KPI mindset”
  - Inappropriate outcome measurement
  - Use of evaluation resources for measurement (usually quantitative) rather than deep dive & nuanced understanding
    - *"No Stats is better than Bad Stats" (BC Panellist)*

# So what do we do with all this?

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- What's new?
- Implications of ...
  - Complexity, layers of implementation
  - High stakes
  - Innovation timelines vs election cycles
  - What's powerful at one level may be less so at another

# Discussion topics

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- How do we promote a learning purpose for evaluation?
- How do we embed evaluation into the planning process?
- How do we promote developmental evaluation?
- How do we promote consumer involvement in evaluation?
- How can we learn, or teach, political nous?
- How do we counter the “KPI mindset”?

# One key insight

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# Acknowledgements

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WestWood Spice would like to thank the panellists who provided their views both in British Columbia and in NSW:

Anne Baldwin

Bill Reid

Fraser Bell

James Coyle

Victoria Schuckel

Chris Shipway

Margaret Scott

Maura Boland

Mel Miller