



Complex evaluations in the political context: Designing an evaluation framework for a whole-of-government reform program


AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY CONFERENCE
4 September 2017

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission





Presentation structure

- Background
 - Complexity of the evaluand
 - Key evaluation challenges
 - Our solutions
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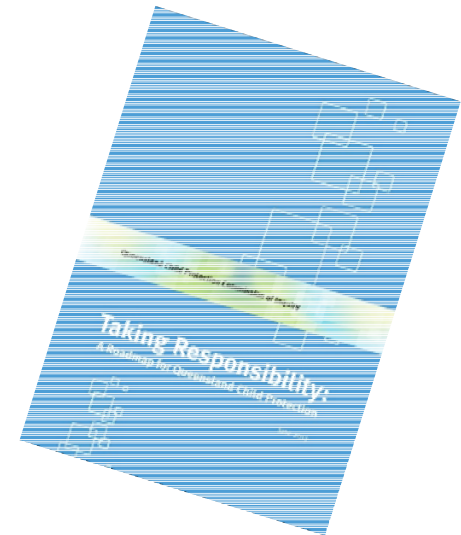
CONTEXT

The Inquiry

- Queensland Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection to review child protection system and recommend way forward
- Identified 121 recommendations that comprise the Roadmap – the basis of the *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reform program

The Reform Program

- 10-year reform program with three phases



PHASE 1	PHASE 2					PHASE 3				
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Planning, preparation and trials	Gradual roll-out of reform strategies				R E V I E W	Consolidation				R E V I E W



EVALUATION ENVIRONMENT

QFCC-led program-level evaluations

Overarching evaluation framework

Outlines a high-level approach to evaluating the reform program, including components, methods and timing

Year 3 (2017-18)
evaluation plan

Year 5 (2018-19)
evaluation plan

Year 10 (2023-24)
evaluation plan

Provide a detailed approach to evaluation at each time point, including participants, sampling, methods and data sources

Activity-level evaluations led by agencies and agency data

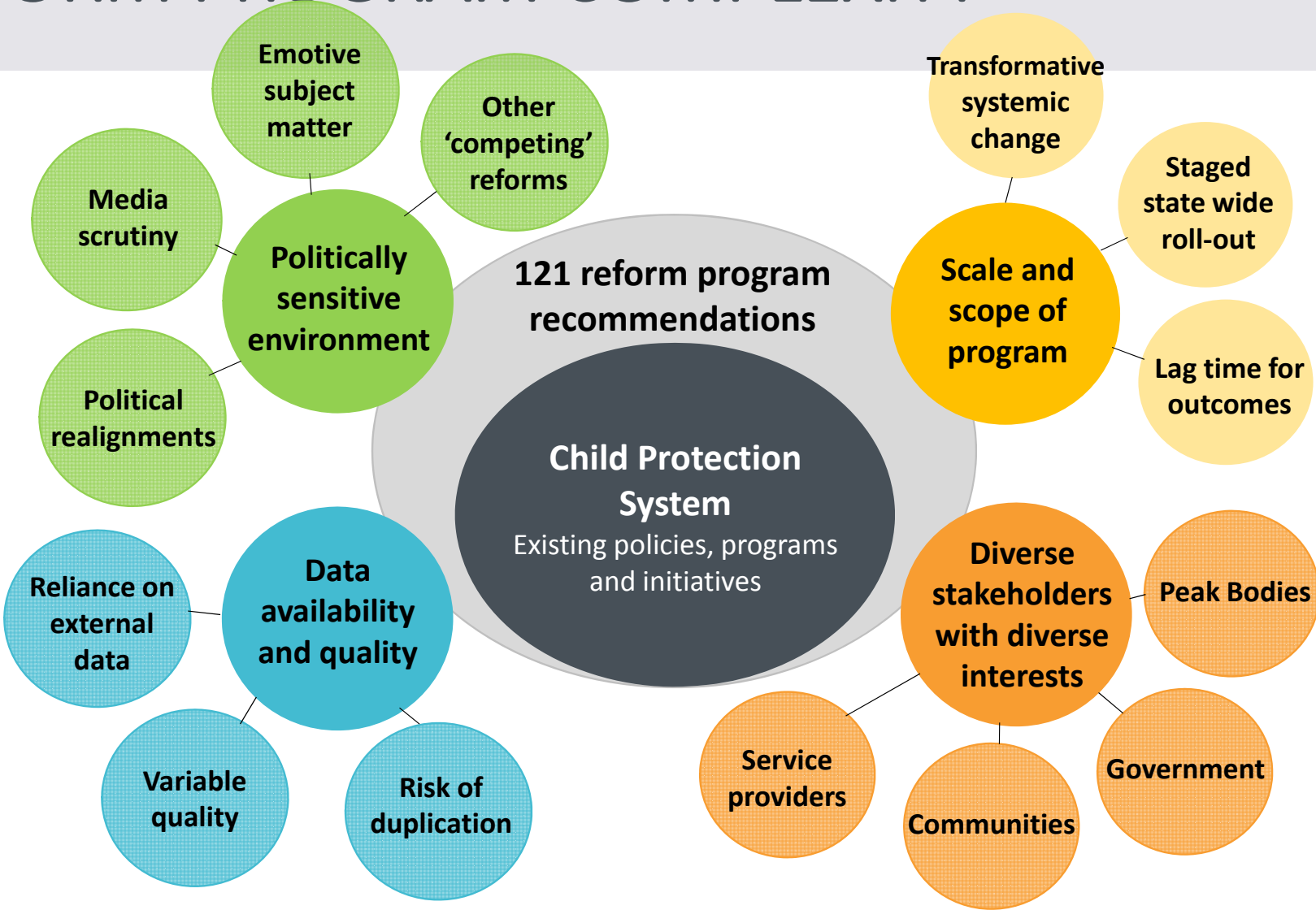
Work package/
recommendation

- Evaluation frameworks
- Evaluation reports
- Service delivery data

Agency administrative
data

Service delivery and/or
administrative data on cohorts
relevant to the reform program

REFORM PROGRAM COMPLEXITY



CHALLENGES

**Diversity of
stakeholders
with diverse
interests**

**Data
availability
and quality**

**Scale and
scope of
program**

**Politically
sensitive
environment**

CHALLENGES

Diversity of stakeholders with diverse interests

- Multiple government and non-government partners
- Different interests
- Different information needs
- Different levels of influence

CHALLENGES

Scale and scope of program

- Whole-of-system transformative change program
- Staged roll-out of programs, services, activities and initiatives
- Reforms span from legislative change to cultural shifts
- Outcomes may not be evident in early stages of program

CHALLENGES

Data availability and quality

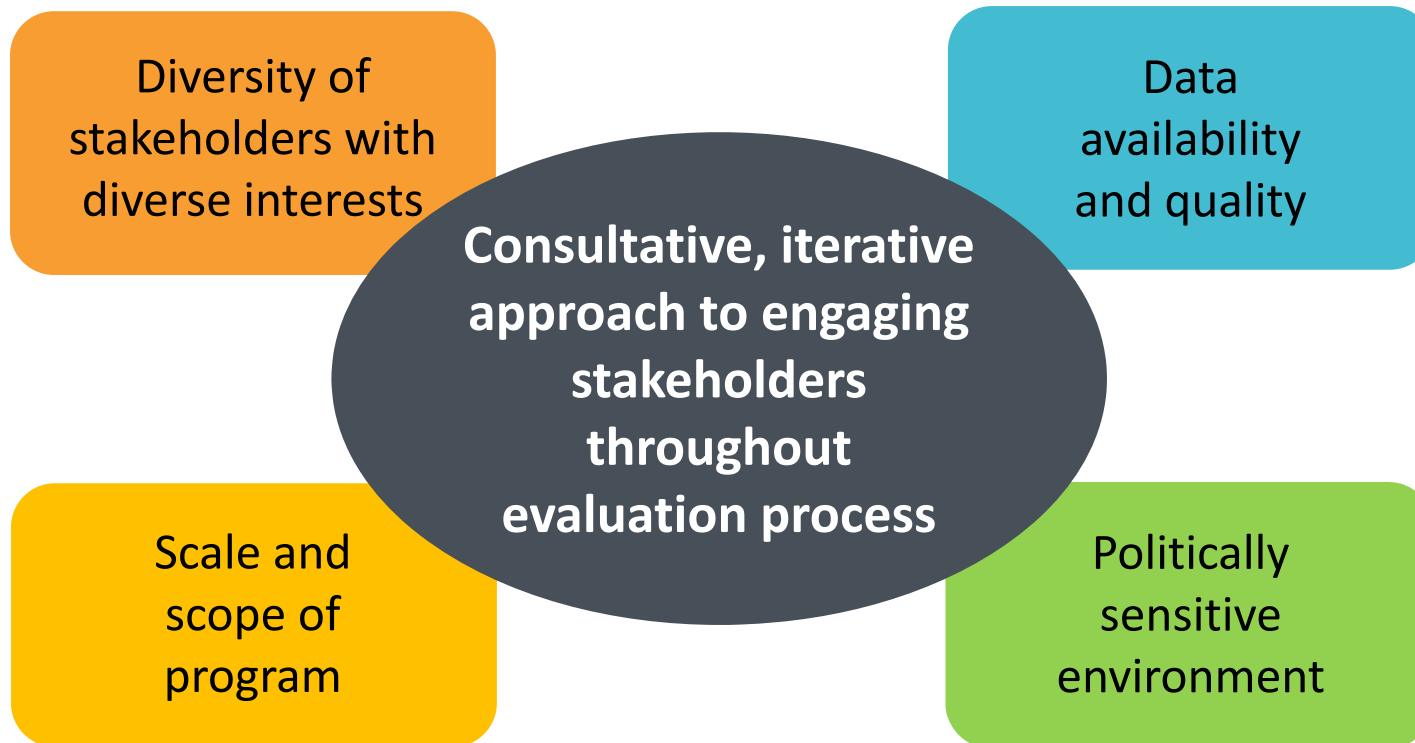
- Data owned by external entities
- Quality dependent on ability of those collecting, inputting, etc.
- Availability is variable depending on stage of program roll-out
- Various concurrent evaluations increases risk of duplication and stakeholder consultation fatigue

CHALLENGES

Politically sensitive environment

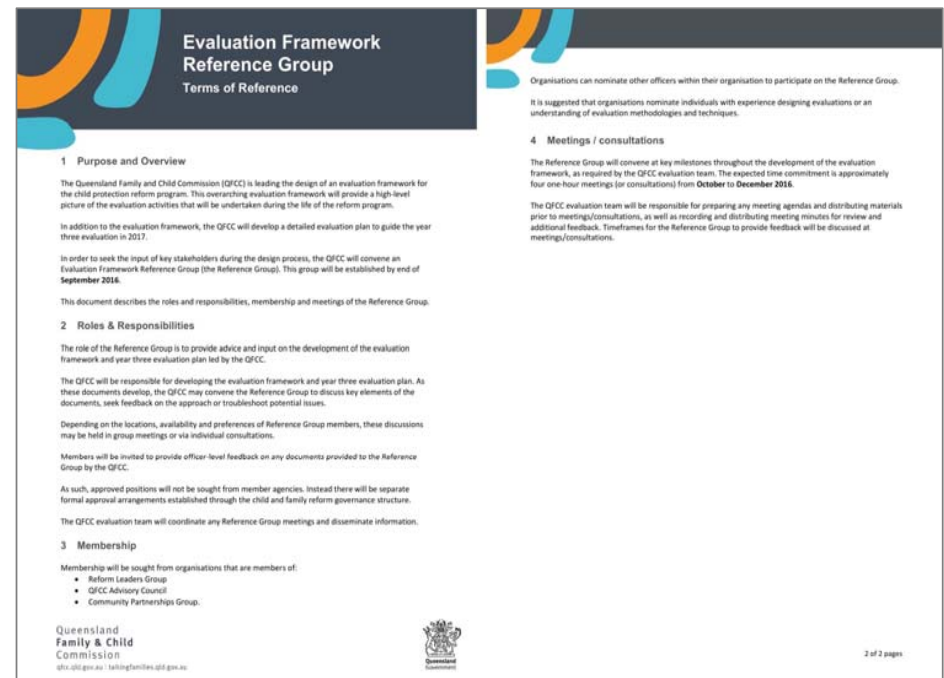
- 10-year program vs. three* year election cycle
- Child protection a highly emotive subject area
- Media coverage and scrutiny
- Concurrent reforms in other human services sectors

SOLUTION



ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

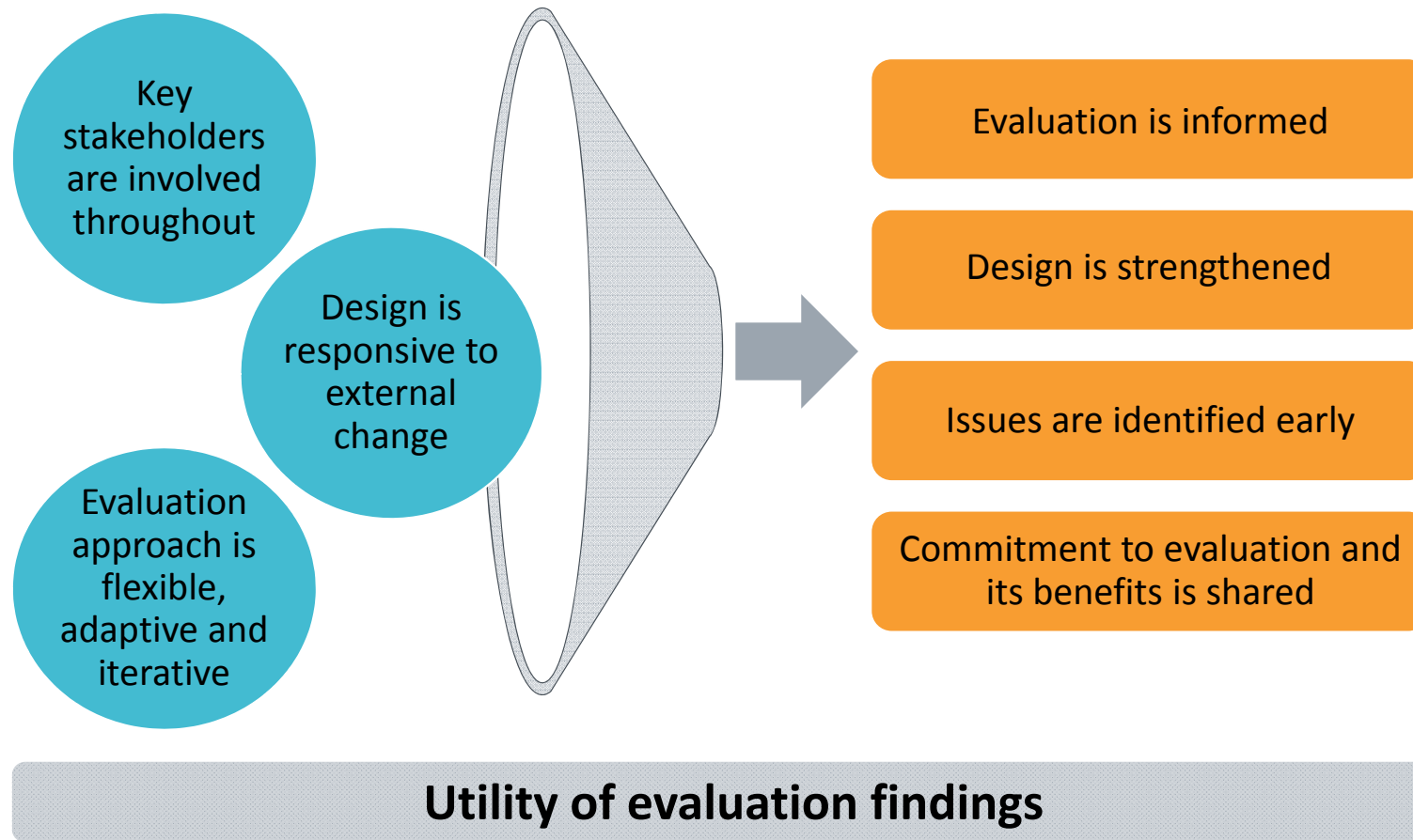
- Identified a broad range of interested stakeholders
- Convened a reference group with representatives from:
 - Government
 - Non-government organisations
 - Academia
- Adopted a purpose driven, targeted approach
- External peer review



OUR APPROACH



WHAT WE LEARNED...





Thank you

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EVALUATION COMPONENTS

		Year 3 (2017-18)	Year 5 (2018-19)	Year 10 (2023-24)
Process	Evaluation of foundations Assessment of the extent to which the foundations identified in the reform Roadmap are in place, and their influence on implementation	●	●	
	Overall process evaluation High-level evaluation of reform implementation and design, including analysis of factors impacting on reforms	●	●	
Effectiveness	Synthesis against reform Supporting Outcomes Synthesis of outcomes against Supporting Outcomes identified in the reform organising framework	●	●	●
	Place-based case studies Development of in-depth, place-based case studies that take a systems approach to examine how key reform areas interact in a local context. Case studies will identify what works, for whom, and in which contexts	●	●	●
Impact	Overview of system changes Summary of system changes and discussion about the extent to which systemic trends are attributable to the reforms	●	●	
	Impact on children and families Impact of the reforms on outcomes for children in the child protection system, and child protection outcomes for at-risk children & families	○	●	●
Financial sustainability	Financial sustainability Assessment of whether the underlying financial assumption of the reform program has been met (i.e. that increased investment in secondary and early intervention services will reduce demand in the statutory sector, freeing up resources to continue funding of secondary and early intervention services), drawing on financial simulation modelling of reform impacts.		●	●

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