EVALUATION GOVERNANCE: BUILDING FERTILE GROUND

Presented by

Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Urbis and the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General



PRESENTERS







URBIS

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THE NPA ON **LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

A national legal assistance sector that is integrated, efficient and effective, focussed on improving access to justice for disadvantaged people and maximising service delivery within available resources



Funding





 Children and young people (up to 24 years) Indigenous Australians

- Older people (aged over 65 years)
- People experiencing, or at risk of, family violence
- People experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- People in custody and prisoners

- People residing in rural or remote areas
- People with disability or mental illness
- · People who are culturally and linguistically diverse
- People with low educations levels, and
- Single parents.



Collaborative service planning



Meetings to promote discussions of strategies for service delivery.



Evidence base to identify priority clients and geographic locations with highest levels of legal need.



THE POLICY **LANDSCAPE**







The NPA seeks to support a national legal assistance sector which has many, diverse stakeholders











> 150 community legal centres!



























LAW AND JUSTICE FOUNDATION OF NEW COUNT WALES



OF AUSTRALIA







... Plus relevant state and territory departments



THE POLICY LANDSCAPECONTINUED

Participate in collaborative service planning

Community Legal Centers (CLCs)

> 150 centres

+ national peak

← NPA →

Legal Aid Commissions (LACs)

8 commissions

+ national peak



7 providers + national peak



Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLs)

14 organisations

+ national forum

Australian Pro Bono Centre



Law Council of Australia

Represents 65,000 lawyers

Non-for-profits & pro bono partnerships with the private legal profession

Other relevant organisations, e.g. the Law & Justice Foundation of New South Wales



many, diverse

stakeholders

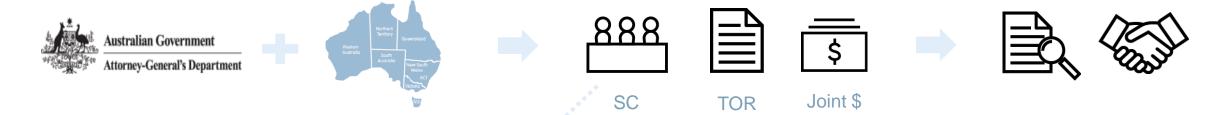
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JOINT BEGINNINGS



The formation of the NPA Review Steering Committee (SC) ensured joint accountability and lead to increased stakeholder buy-in



Roles and responsibilities

- ✓ Refined and endorsed the terms of reference for the review.
- ✓ Refined and endorsed the procurement approach, the request for quote and the tender evaluation plan.
- ✓ Evaluated quotes for the independent reviewer.
- ✓ Approved the Review Plan including stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ Established and oversaw the NPA Review Advisory Group.
- ✓ Endorsed the completion of deliverables, including the public release of the final report.



COMPLEXITIES AND RISKS

Multiple clients (9 of them!)

How do we manage all these clients?

Sector interests (\$1.3B in play)

How do we mange all those stakeholders?

As evaluators, we're alert to risk when conducting high-profile, large scale reviews.

Constrained TORs (What elephant?)

How do we address the elephant?

RESPONDING TO RISKS

How do we manage all these clients?



Very high level of contact; utilisation focus; trust + confidence building

How do we mange all those stakeholders?



Keep them close; defensible logic; openness, trust and confidence

It's incumbent on evaluators to have an eye on the end game.

How do we address the elephant?



Listen, don't shut down; acknowledge, don't ignore

THE EVALUATION PERIOD

SC and AG were active participants in the process, with at least monthly touch points.

Kick-off and planning

Relationships established. Review and input by **SC and AG** to approach and plan.

SC and AG reviewed consultation paper, and enabled network distribution.

Written submissions

SC and AG provide access to data, as well as critiques of implications & limitations.

Existing docs/data analysed

Consultations in all jurisdictions

SC members advised on scheduling and actively supported logistics.

Prelim findings presented to **SC** and to **AG** for an 'early look' and critique

Sense making and findings testing

Report development

Structural draft, plus content draft and final report reviewed by **SC**, and presented to them for detailed feedback. **AG** also provided comment on draft report.

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Commissioning

Evaluation

Post-evaluation

GOOD GOVERNANCE IS FUNDAMENTAL

Good governance supports risk management and is highly enabling for evaluators Joint commitment and capacity to practically enable and support evaluation delivery

SHARED PURPOSE PRACTICAL COLLECTIVE AUTHORITY CAPACITY

Jointly owned TORs and practical focus on enabling the evaluation (not negotiating the next NPA)

Consistent, senior involvement with knowledge and capacity to make decisions

(White and Winkworth 2012)

THE EVALUATOR'S ROLE

Keep a multi-dimensional utilisation focus: what is the end-game for ALL stakeholders?

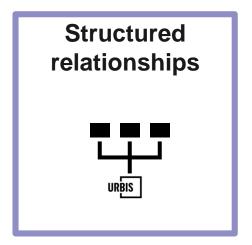
Understanding that process credibility matters: engage and leverage an active governance group to guide defensible method/process decisions

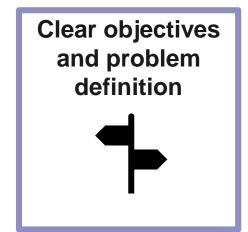
Evaluators can be process mediators within a governance context

Iterate your findings: explore, socialise, refine and validate: "no surprises"

REFLECTIONS (I)

Key factors present:

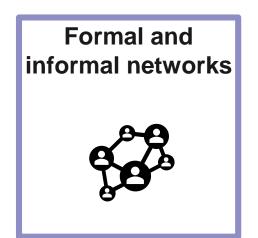






On reflection the evaluation had a lot of the ingredients of successful collaboration







REFLECTIONS (II)

Urbis had in place governance mechanisms, processes and structures with final decision making authority that enable the objectives of all parties entering into the collaboration to be known and considered



THANK YOU