

September 2024

Finding our way to a good recommendation

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Disclaimer: This presentation reflects our personal perspectives only.

ACIL ALLEN





Coming Together, Melissa Bell,
a proud Gunditjmara/Yorta Yorta woman



Finding our way
to a good
recommendation

Why develop recommendations?

Formative evaluation recommendations

- Find areas of improvement for a program, by focusing on processes to see if desired outcomes will be achieved

EVALUATOR

- To answer the “so what?” question that arises from evaluation findings

Summative evaluation recommendations

- Clearly inform if the program or something similar should continue, and direct how future investments or policy directions can increase value for money

COMMISSIONER

- Independent statement of ‘where to’ from findings
- Crystallise thinking and move to ‘solution focus’

Adapted from Climate Change Fund Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework:

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/nsw-plans-and-progress/government-strategies-and-frameworks/taking-action-climate-change/evaluation>

When are recommendations developed?

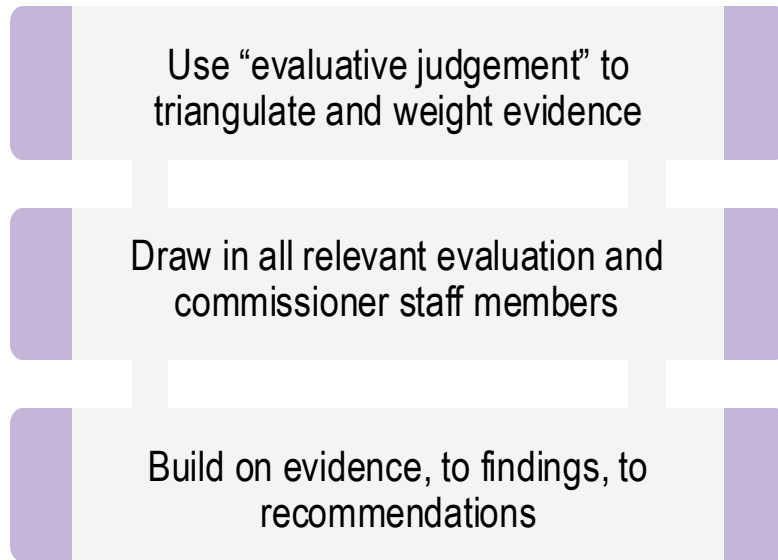
EVALUATOR

- Continuous and iterative process of evidence gathering, insight generation and recommendation development
- Testing and validation pre-drafting
- Recommendations 'crystalise' during drafting

COMMISSIONER

- Might be visible from evidence being discussed, but first seen in the draft evaluation report
- Evolves from an initial idea to clearly worded statements, to polished wording that is framed to suit context

How are recommendations developed?



or



INDEPENDENCE

- Evaluator is an expert and knows their analysis
- Published under evaluators' branding

How do we balance independence and collaboration?

...

COLLABORATION

- Staff provide evidence and context
- Approval manager can suggest framing to improve usefulness





Zero emissions hovercraft (ZerHo)

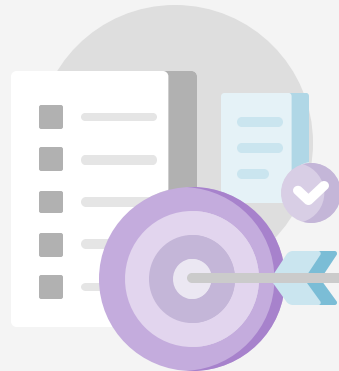
Disclaimer

All information used for this workshop is fictional. Resemblance to specific programs or reports may occur due to common evaluation themes reflected in this presentation.

Zero Emission Hovercraft program

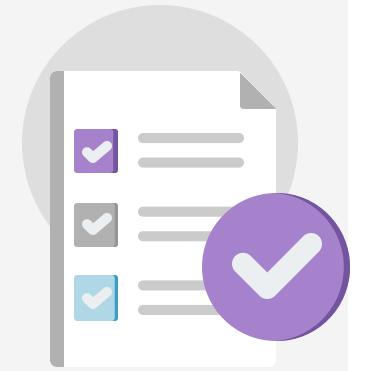
OBJECTIVES

- Reduce emissions generated from transport
- Provide for increase in transport demand



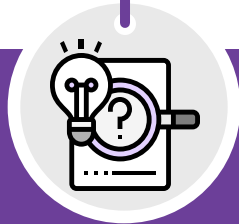
PROGRAM DELIVERY

- Mechanism: The program provides research grants to develop a functioning hovercraft
- A \$100m program to provide grants to researchers



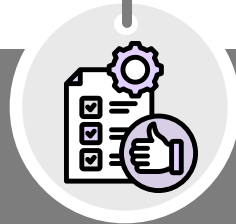
Constructive, clear: specify what to fix

ZeroHo needs better quality data for decision making.



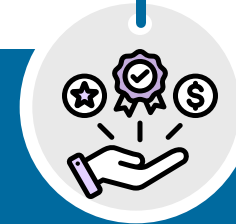
FINDING

Data was of variable quality and had limited value.



RECOMMENDATION

ZerHo needs to plan for and structure data collection to reduce gaps.

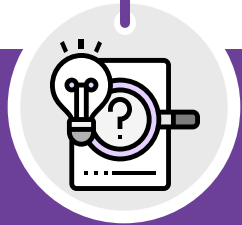


BENEFIT

To improve data quality and support decision making.

Objective, pragmatic: identify government's role

Government should provide more research funding



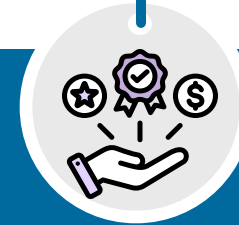
FINDING

Hovercraft research is expensive, and some researchers ran out of money.



RECOMMENDATION

Consider fewer but larger grants to match research needs.

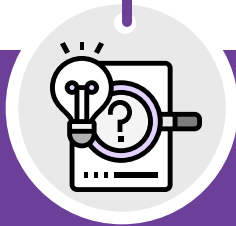


BENEFIT

Larger grants could leverage investment.

Evidence based: triangulate to balance insights

Government should reduce IP restrictions in grant agreements to promote innovation



FINDING

Some researchers found the current Intellectual Property frameworks limited their ability to share information. The comparative study found that excessive regulation limited collaboration.



RECOMMENDATION

Design grant rules to streamline knowledge sharing arrangements and create clarity around potential returns.

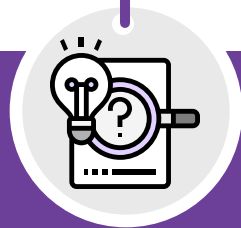


BENEFIT

Accelerate ZerHo development by enabling ideas to be shared and used.

Authoritative, future-proofed: program vs system issues

Allow multiple users to use the grant application system



FINDING

The grant application system required a single user, which prevented collaboration during development.



RECOMMENDATION

Update the grant system so collaborative programs can have multiple users input to the application.



BENEFIT

This would improve efficiency, especially for shared applications.

To recap our journey: useful recommendations



OBJECTIVE & CONSTRUCTIVE



CLEARLY STRUCTURED

Linked to evidence



FUTURE PROOFED

Understandable when reconsidered by others later



AUTHORITATIVE

Independent, evidence-based perspective



HAVE BUY-IN

Create an environment where sponsors buy-in to the process



SUPPORT CHANGE

Can address things to start, change, continue, or stop



CLEAR LANGUAGE

Specific and easily interpreted



PRAGMATIC

Recognises the organisation's role and limits



Questions?

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