



IT'S TIME TO END
HOMELESSNESS



LAUNCH HOUSING

Evaluation by Stealth: Insights from Embedded Evaluation Practice

Samiha Barkat and Edgar Daly
Australasian Evaluation Society Conference
Melbourne, 2024





Acknowledgement of Country

We would like acknowledge the Traditional Owners of all the lands we meet, live, learn and work on every day. We pay respect to their Elders; past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia and they have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and culture.

ABOUT LAUNCH HOUSING

WHO WE ARE

Launch Housing is the largest independent Melbourne-based specialist homelessness organisation.

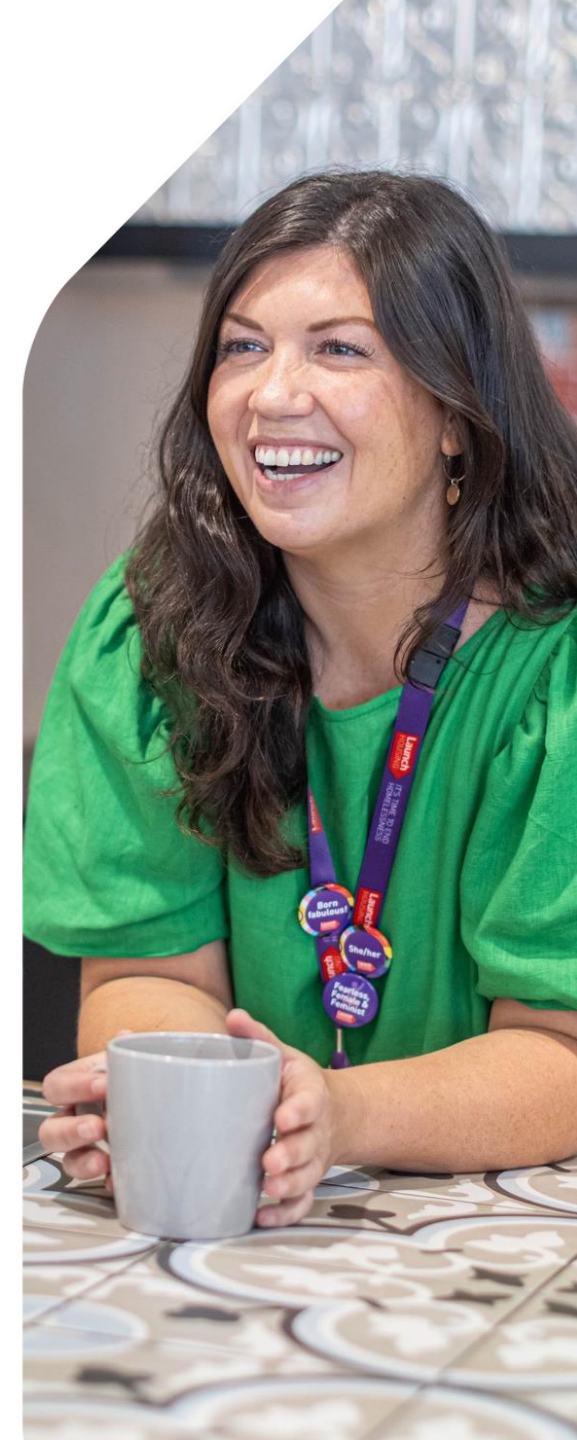
With more than 75 years' experience and 400 staff working across 14 locations in greater Melbourne, **we bring solutions to homelessness under one roof for over 14,000 people each year.**

OUR MISSION

To end homelessness.

OUR VISION

We believe housing is a basic human right that affords people dignity. Everyone has a right to a home and it's our job to make this happen.



How is embedded evaluation different?

- **It's about orientation – from outside to within**
- **Being adaptive comes with the territory**
- **Evaluands and evaluation systems**

An evaluation system is an integrated and intended configuration of elements in an organisational setting, which secures ongoing evaluation of many evaluands across time and space.

Dahler-Larsen and Raimondo, European Evaluation Society Conference, Copenhagen 2022

We need to orient ourselves in the ecosystem that we work in and recognise the importance of relationships in our work.

Paraphrasing June Oscar, AO, AES 2024



wikiHow to Be Stealthy

1

Walk like an animal. You know how forest animals like deer and mountain lions can

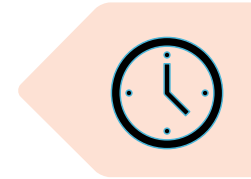
Why Launch Housing invested in embedded evaluation capability?

- Continuous improvement
- Learning
- Flexibility
- Recognising contribution
- Capture change holistically

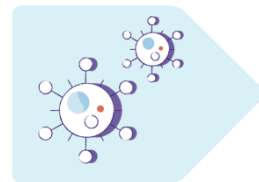
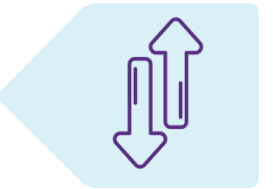


Resourcing for evaluation is often excluded from government grant packages, resulting in missed opportunities to understand impact. Government commissioned evaluations are often not shared with service providers, resulting in missed learning opportunities.

To capture impact at an organisation level and support continuous improvement & decision-making – be adaptive rather than set and forget.



Establishing the Research, Evaluation & Data (RED) was a signal to the organisation that evaluation and impact measurement is important and part of 'doing the work' and not an afterthought.



Building internal evaluation capability across teams was important given constraints so teams can lead their own MEL

Whose value are we capturing?
Evaluation has been a time-bound exercise 'done to' program teams by external experts as opposed to evaluation done 'with teams' who often hold nuanced understanding of what works well and what needs to change.



What does RED do?

RED oversees impact measurement across the organisation, supporting service improvement and evaluation capacity building, advocacy efforts, tenders and grant submissions and developing a robust evidence base.

Establishing evidence (including practice knowledge from teams that don't always get captured in outcomes evaluations) and sharing back

Helping with our scaling-up and scaling-back discussions at the Board level



What we deliver

Reporting for learning, accountability and advocacy:

- Service reviews and program evaluations
- Submissions to call for papers, e.g. PC
- Annual Insights Series
- Annual Impact Report
- Routine performance reporting

We build the capability of program staff to strengthen measurement across the org.

- Program logic and MEL development
- Staff training and workshops
- Drop-in 'data labs'

We wrap developmental evaluation around priority strategic projects across the organisation to embed learnings and keep projects on track.

We support tender and grant submissions, including helping with scale-up and scale-back discussions at the Senior Leadership and Board levels



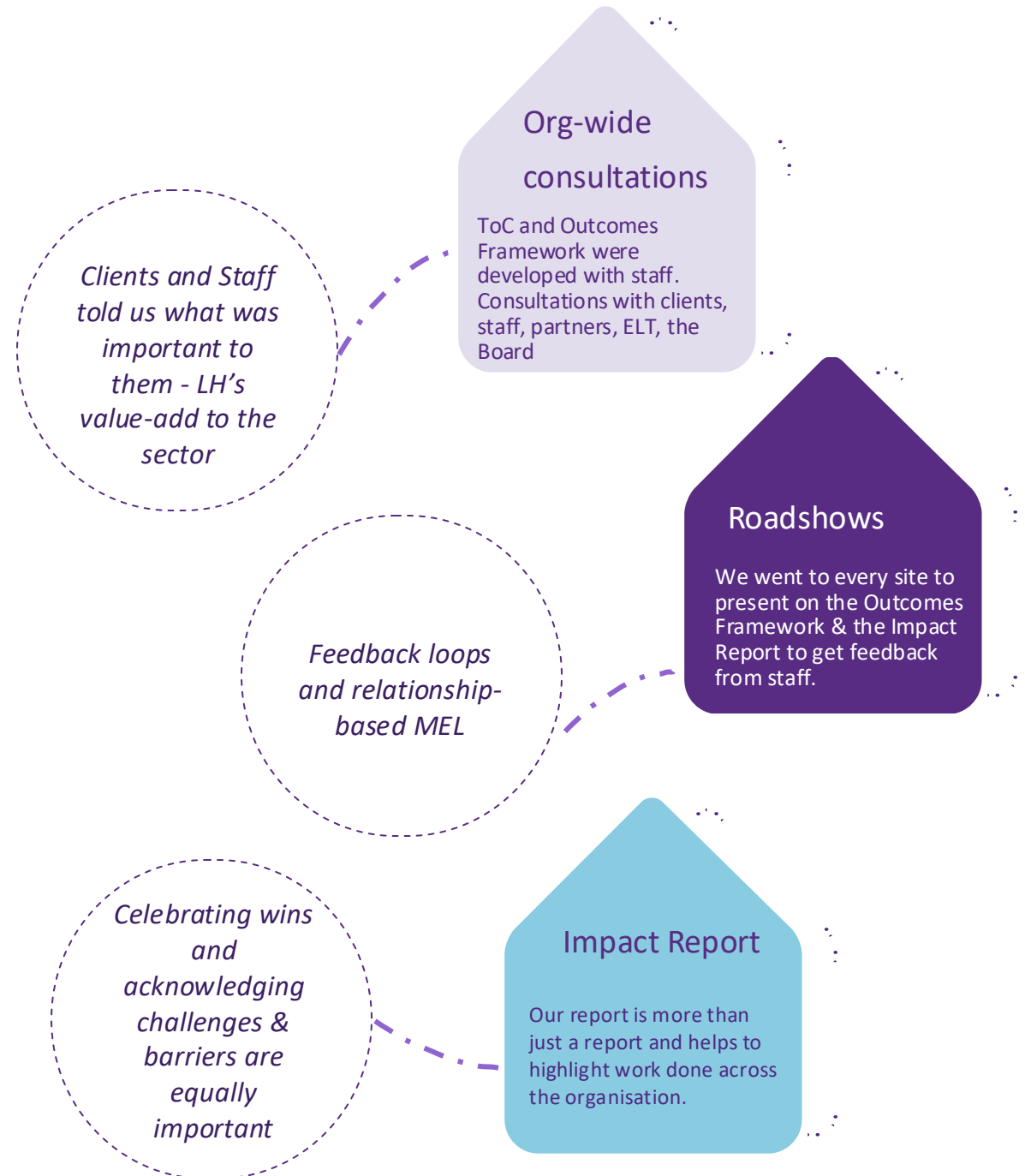
Principle:
Embedding client voice

We work closely with our Cultural Safety and Lived Experience Advisors to centre lived experience and embed safe practices in the collection and use of client data.

Impact culture is key to success

As RED was established, the team spent time developing relationships across the organisation. This was key to **breaking down silos, speaking the same language**, and an opportunity to hear from staff what was important and meaningful to them.

An important message from Senior Leadership: Fail fast, learn fast.

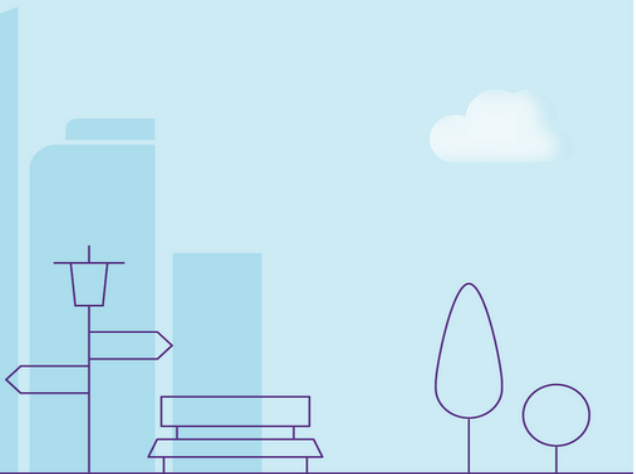
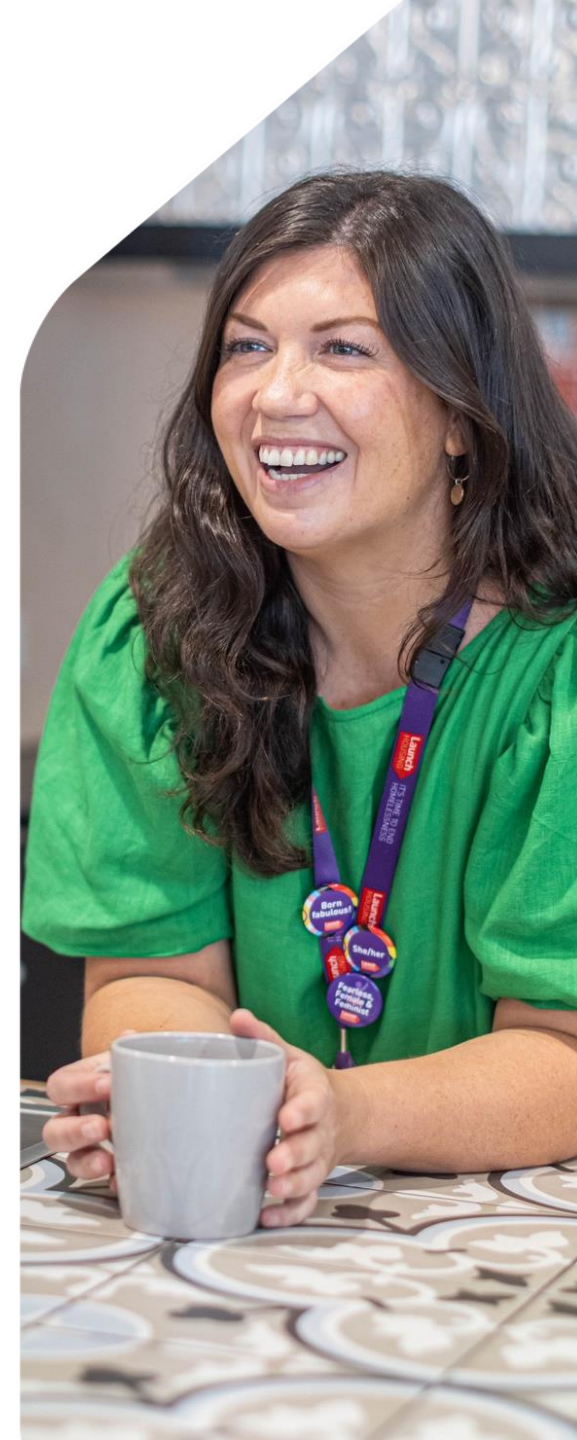


- **Who identifies as an embedded evaluator?**

- **Who identifies as an embedded evaluator?**
- **For those of you who do, who works in:**
 - Gov
 - International development
 - Not for profit / community sector
 - Somewhere else?

How does impact measurement play out at Launch Housing?

3 Case Studies



Case Study 1: Integrated Impact Measurement Framework (IIMF)

We measure impact at all levels of our work. This allows us to measure progress against our organisational mission and to build an evidence base to advocate for systems change.

Our Annual Impact Report expands on our routine reporting and captures outcomes and impact in addition to outputs.

Our integrated approach to impact measurement ensures all parts of our organisation are involved and own the process and outcomes.



Overview

1.

Launch Housing **Strategic Plan** identifies org-wide and program specific priorities over five years. The Strategic Plan outlines our org-wide **Theory of Change**.

2.

Our **Business Plan** and **Outcomes Framework** outlines our org-wide approach to measuring impact. **10 Impact Measures** enable us to **track progress against our Theory of Change**

3.

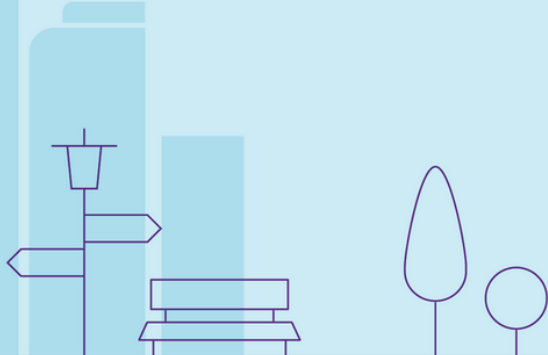
Our **annual reporting** outlines our schedule for reporting including routine program and organisational reporting, as well as our annual Impact Reporting and advocacy papers. **10 IMs form the basis of our Impact Report.**

Adaptive

- First year, we were building the plane as we were flying it
- Implemented the Outcomes Framework and developed the first Impact Report
- After that, spent time codifying the process - data dictionary and definitions, data source, programs
- Currently, 3rd Year – we have revised several Impact Measures to better reflect more meaningful outcomes

Case Study 2: Partnership approach to a major evaluation

Better Health and Housing Program is an integrated health and housing program that delivers housing and health outcomes through intensive coordinated support to individuals experiencing homelessness. St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and Launch Housing run the program in partnership. The program targets people who have significant health challenges and who have experienced chronic homelessness.



Overview

1.

Drivers: Insecure funding context; feedback from government about data gaps; keen interest from delivery partners regarding opportunities to develop the integrated model further

2.

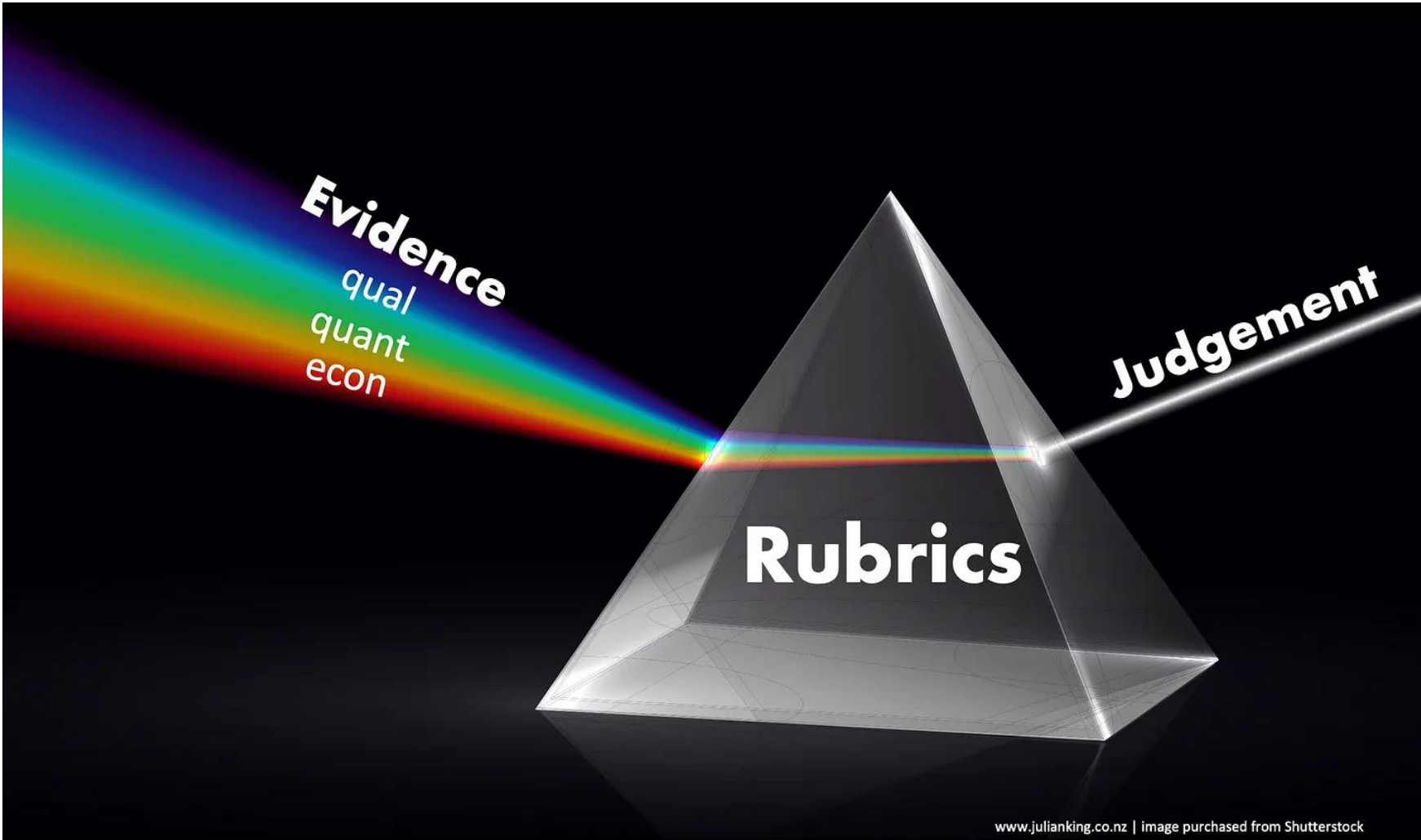
Efficiencies: How can we work within a short timeframe and within a small budget to deliver a rigorous evaluation that is useful for us and relevant for government?

3.

Partnership: A hybrid approach with economic analysis led by external team; health data analysis led by SVHM Evaluation Unit; Launch Housing does the rest.

Lessons from straddling external and internal evaluation

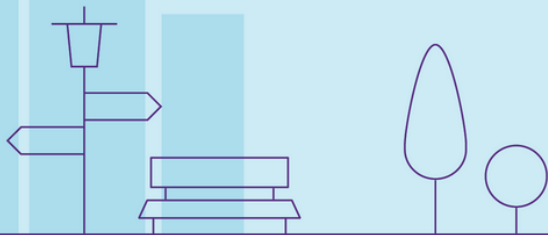
- **How we were adaptive** – all about the project context
- **Relationships** – would we do it again?
- **Other lessons** – we still commission external evaluations
- **Outcome?** TBC...



Case Study 3: Internal service review

Internal Service Review of a crisis support service for families that has been running for 13 years. Initially focused on reducing the number of families living in or at risk of entering unregistered and substandard rooming house accommodation. Now about getting families out of motels.

Despite it being over a decade since families were in rooming houses the service guidelines remain the same as they were at program inception and the team has had little chance to pause and reflect on their work.



Overview

- 1. What we did:** Program data including case file reviews, interviews, a series of workshops.
- 2. Learning focus:** There were no external drivers, org identified need to understand opportunities to improve the program after an internal restructure.
- 3. Emphasis on change management:** Taking our practice 1-2 steps further into the what next.

Lessons from the service review process

- **Staff buy-in** – critical that the process felt useful
- **Timelines important** – properly scoped and then scrutinised
- **Recommendations** - delineation of and spheres of influence important – fold into roles (advocacy too)
- **Service design method building is an iterative process** - we are still learning how best to deliver these in different contexts.

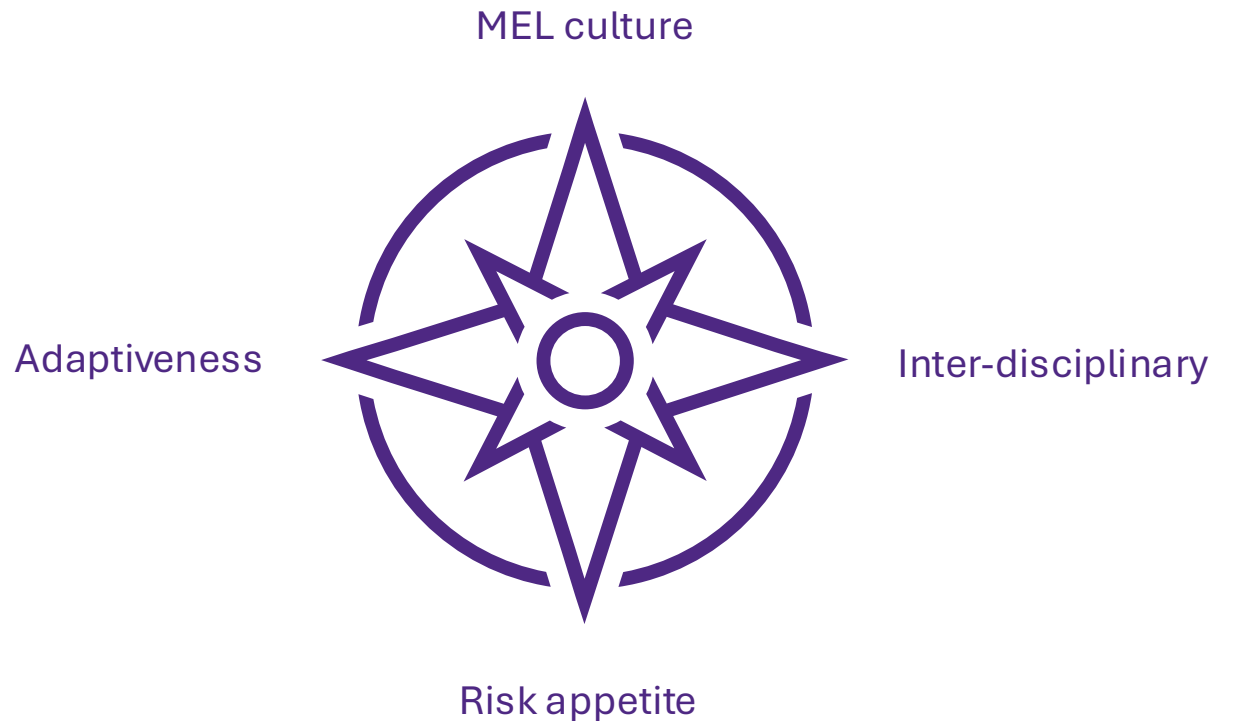
Question time?

- **What challenges do you think an embedded evaluation system might come up against?**

Takeaways

What we didn't fully expect

1. Power dynamics
2. Resource management
3. Timeframes
4. Juggling roles and competing priorities
5. Change management



What's next on our agenda

- Delivering service reviews and evaluations
- Data transformation project – including data sovereignty
- Quarterly learning cycles – data labs
- Continue to find tools and mechanisms to elevate voices of our clients
- Strengthening flow of info from program teams to executives
- Evaluating our evaluation system
- Engage with the broader evaluation and social impact community!



Having the RED team working alongside programs enables us to collect meaningful data and regularly review it to build evidence for funding bodies. Their expertise in evaluations and service reviews allows a deep dive analysis to help inform service design, bring staff along for the journey and engage us all in understanding the impact of the work.

- Group Manager

The session was absolutely fantastic. You were able to so effectively present a lot of information without overwhelming the team, keep them onsite when providing feedback or discussing potential 'trade-offs', and engage them deeply when co-designing solutions. In addition, from a leadership perspective it has really set the team up well for any changes we may end up implementing in future too. I couldn't have hoped for a more productive, engaged and enjoyable session (many of them were saying it didn't feel like a 3 hour meeting) so really want to thank you both for all of your work and skill with this.

- Service Manager



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HOMELESSNESS

THANK YOU

Together, we can end homelessness

FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS

www.launchhousing.org.au



Level 7, 54 Wellington Street
Collingwood, Victoria 3066

T: 03 9288 9600 F: 03 9288 9601
E: info@launchhousing.org.au



How we maintain independence

- Internal monitoring – It is in LH’s interest to scale-up programs that are effective and scale back / adapt ones that aren’t – bigger bang for our buck
- Evaluations – Maintain independence and ensure robust analysis as reports are publicly shared. We are open to the same scrutiny as external evaluators
- We collaborate with technical experts, stakeholders and Govs – Evaluation Advisory Groups; sense-making workshops to co-develop findings and Rec. Key stakeholders can raise issues along the way
- Where \$\$\$ is available, we co-deliver evaluations with external experts
- Internal relationships are key – when we are critical in a report, people know we’ve considered the nuances of the program, context – it lands much better

