

Great Barrier
Reef Foundation

Embracing the L in “MEL”

A Journey Towards Participatory
Evaluation in Government
Programs

Milena Gongora
20 September 2024

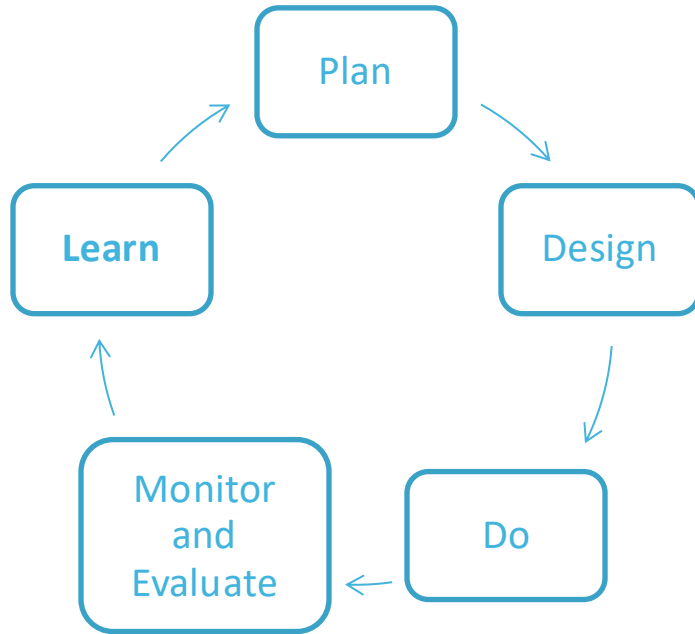




'Reef Wonderland' by Melanie Hava

Melanie Hava '15

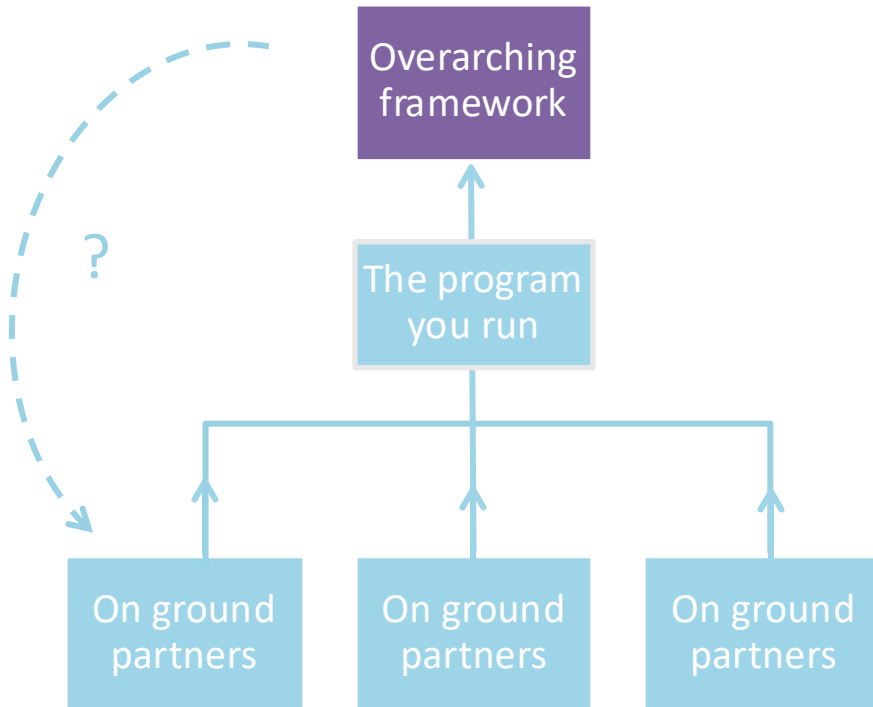
Best practice MEL tells us



- Monitoring and Evaluation is part of an iterative process
- Feedback loop to the program, activities, and to the people
- We should learn from it
- It should be inclusive
- It should ‘give back’



Unfortunately, sometimes it can be



On-ground only 'give' information but don't hear back

No body knows what happens as a result of that reporting

No learning



Reef Trust Partnership Water Quality Program



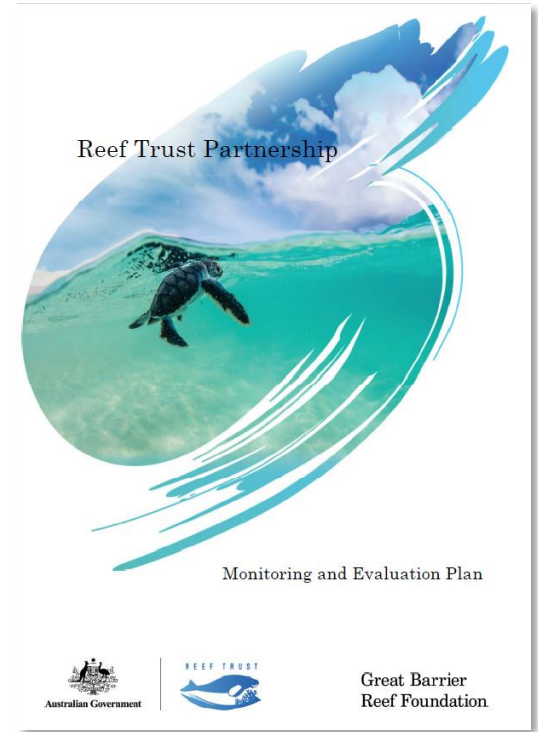
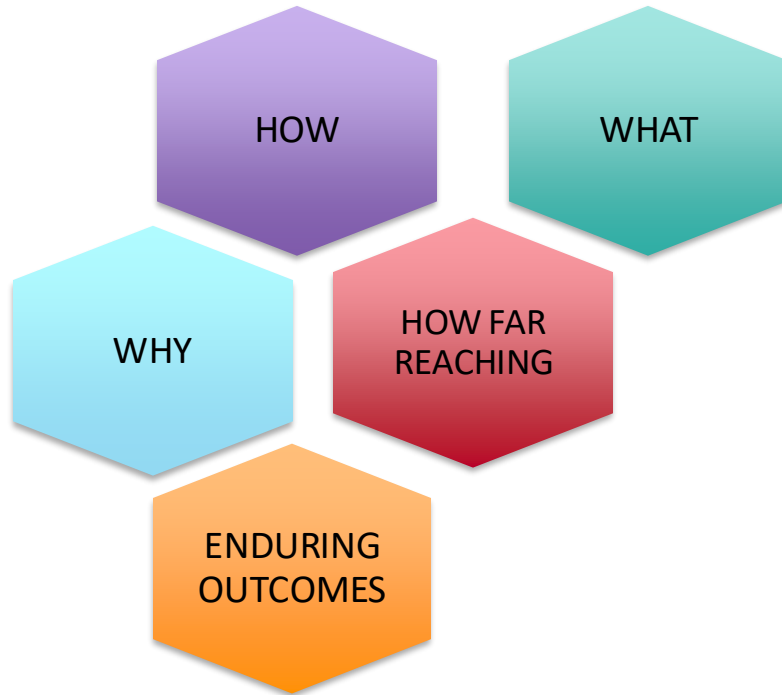
**Improving the quality of
water entering our Reef.**

Budget: \$199.6 million





MEL plan



Results

Abundant information

Synthesise, interpret

Ready to answer our questions



The more complex picture

Why did some farmers
change and others
not?

Why did some areas
have more success
than others?

How can we overcome
our constraints?

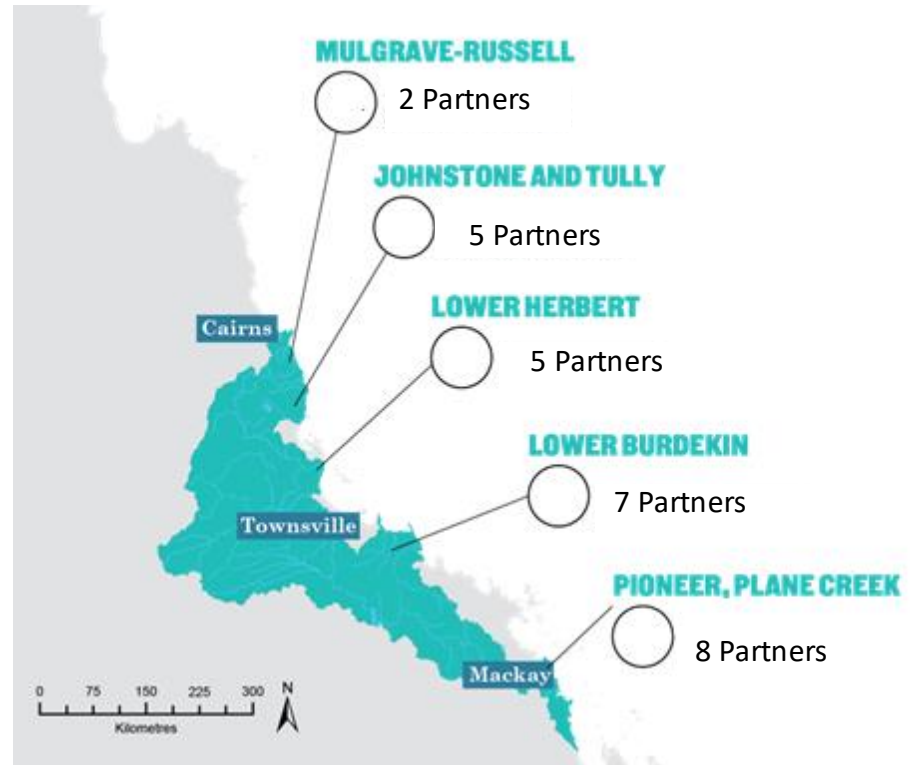
What works best
where?

What is the likelihood
of outcomes enduring
beyond the program?



“Reflections” Workshops

- 4 one-day workshops
- Place-specific
- Facilitated by us, tailored to them
- Carefully managed attendance to front-line practitioners
- Mingled to discourage group thinking
- Create a safe space
- No judgement, no “wrong” answers



Format



Present findings, prompt a question,
unpack in an open discussion



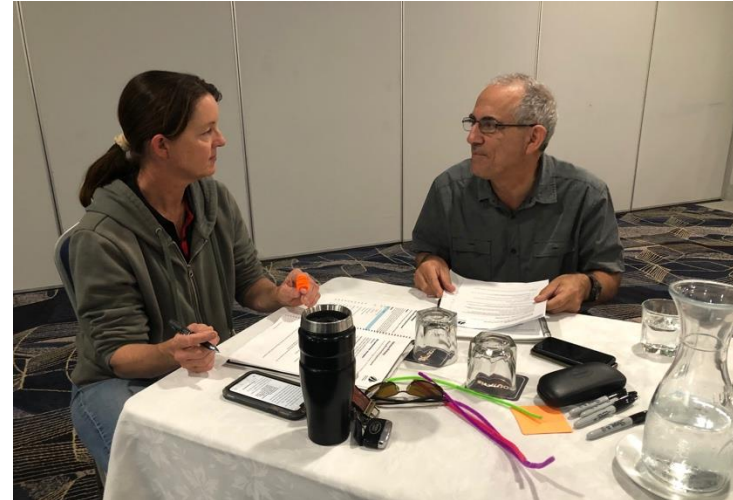
Interview each other on Most
Significant Changes / Learnings



Share stories out loud



Future programs recommendations



What people found interesting

Great to hear different perspectives from other Delivery Providers

People's Assumptions & whether they were correct.

listening to others experiences + learnings from their project journey to date.

I appreciated the forum as an opportunity to provide feedback.

I THOUGHT THE PROCESS WAS REALLY GOOD → well done!



What will change for them

WILL TRY
TO INVOLVE
OTHER PROJECTS
EVEN MORE
IN ACTIVITIES.

Consult all
Stakeholders
before designing
Projects.

Make an effort
to interact more
with the other
delivery providers

More discussions
with growers
about what would
help them best
& communicate
this up



What can we do better

I hope the feedback
from today will
actually make a
difference in
future programs



Take home messages



Connect to people, not just with initial consultation but also at the end, value their input



Do not assume impact, test and verify conclusions



Understand nuances behind the headlines



We owe our partners a knowledge legacy



mgongora@barrierreef.org



Great Barrier
Reef Foundation

Thank you

