

# The ACT Evidence and Evaluation Academy 2021-24

## Lessons learned from a sustained whole-of-government evaluation capacity building effort

Duncan Rintoul: Rooftop Social; IPPG Industry Fellow  
George Argyrous: Paul Ramsey Foundation; IPPG industry Fellow  
Narina Dahms: ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

September 2024



Institute for  
Public Policy  
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## The ACT Evidence and Evaluation Academy

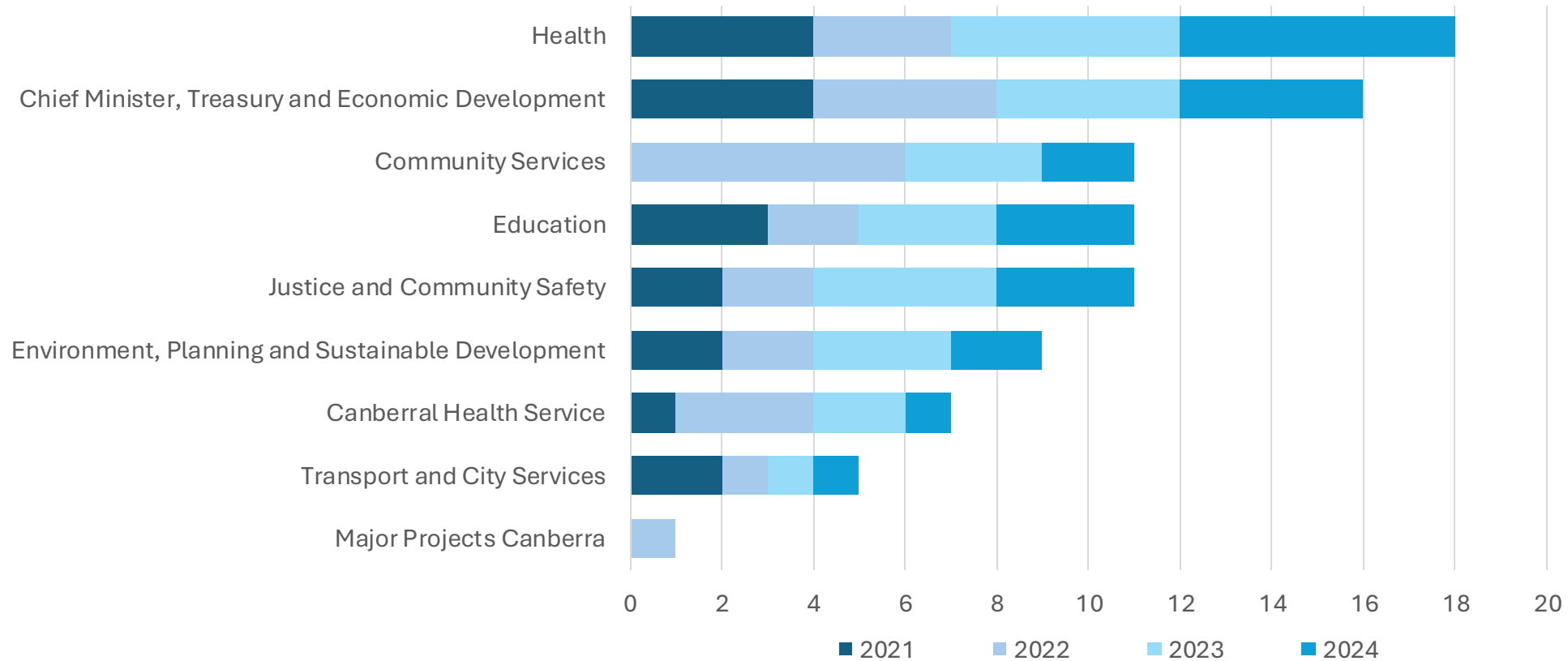
1. A year in the life
2. The theory of change
3. Outcomes and enablers



# 1. A year in the life

Jan/Feb Expression of interest process

March Places offered and confirmed



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April Coaches assigned



**Vanessa  
Hood**



**Claire  
Grealy**



**Charlie  
Tulloch**



**Nicky  
Beland**



**Kate  
Randall**



**Scott  
Bayley**

# 1. A year in the life

Jan/Feb Expression of interest process

March Places offered and confirmed

April Coaches assigned  
Workshops 1+2

May Workshops 3+4

June Workshops 5+6

1	The big picture
2	Using evidence for government initiatives
3	From evidence to action: clarifying intended outcomes, logic and assumptions
4	Evaluating progress towards outcomes
5	Evaluating the implementation and efficiency of government initiatives
6	From evidence to action: using evaluation findings for good (and related topics)

“ A ‘good’ policy-making process... [promotes] an understanding of:

- the causes and nature of a policy problem or ‘issue’
- the relative merits and trade-offs in different options for dealing with it
- whether the option ultimately chosen turns out as intended. ”



# 1. A year in the life

Jan/Feb Expression of interest process

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April Coaches assigned  
Workshops 1+2

2022

Indigenous methodologies in evaluation  
Skye Trudgett, Kowa Collaboration

May Workshops 3+4

2023

Building evaluation capacity in your Directorate  
Del Lloyd (Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence, Victoria)

June Workshops 5+6

2024

Organising and sustaining collective whole-of-government efforts towards outcomes

July Masterclass

Gail Winkworth (Successful Collaborations)  
+ Deb Brill (prev. NSW Land and Housing)

# 1. A year in the life

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April	Coaches assigned Workshops 1+2
May	Workshops 3+4
June	Workshops 5+6
July	Masterclass
August	Draft presentation



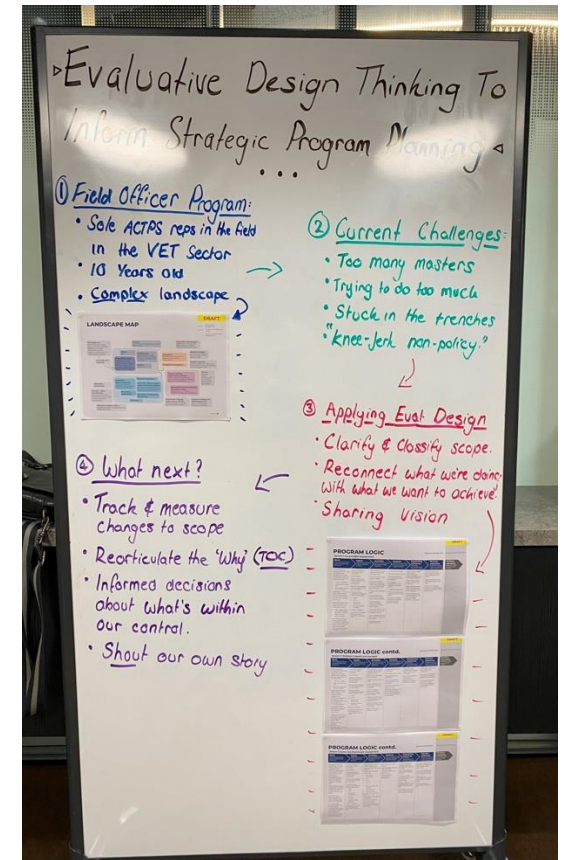
Patricia Rogers



Amy Gullickson



Kim Grey



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- Jan/Feb Expression of interest process
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- May Workshops 3+4
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- July Masterclass
- August Draft presentation
- September Showcase



# 1. A year in the life

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March Places offered and confirmed

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Workshops 1+2

May Workshops 3+4

June Workshops 5+6

July Masterclass

August Draft presentation

September Showcase

October Reflect + Reset

## ACT Government Evidence and Evaluation Academy 2023: Final Report

REVISED

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Institute for Public Policy and Governance, UTS

With input from Dr George Argyrous and Con Alaveras

November 2023

## 2. The theory of change

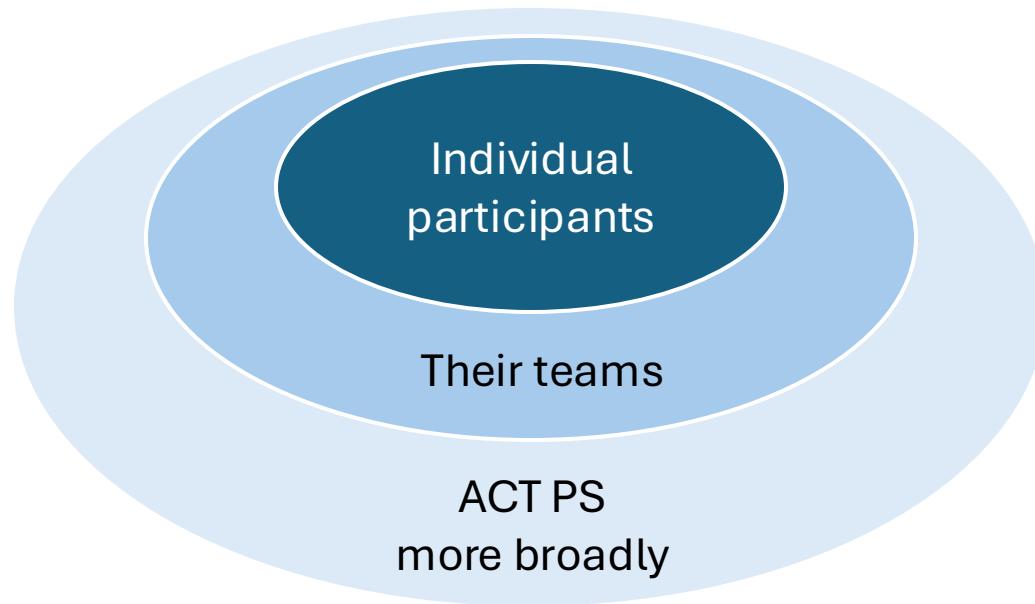
Influenced by Commissioning Academies in the UK and Canada

- Selected
- A cohort: changemakers, community of influence, go together and stay together
- Direct applicability
- Extended over a period
- Activities beyond the classroom (for us that's the coaching and the presentation)

An alternative to one-off workshops (opt in, satisfied but... )

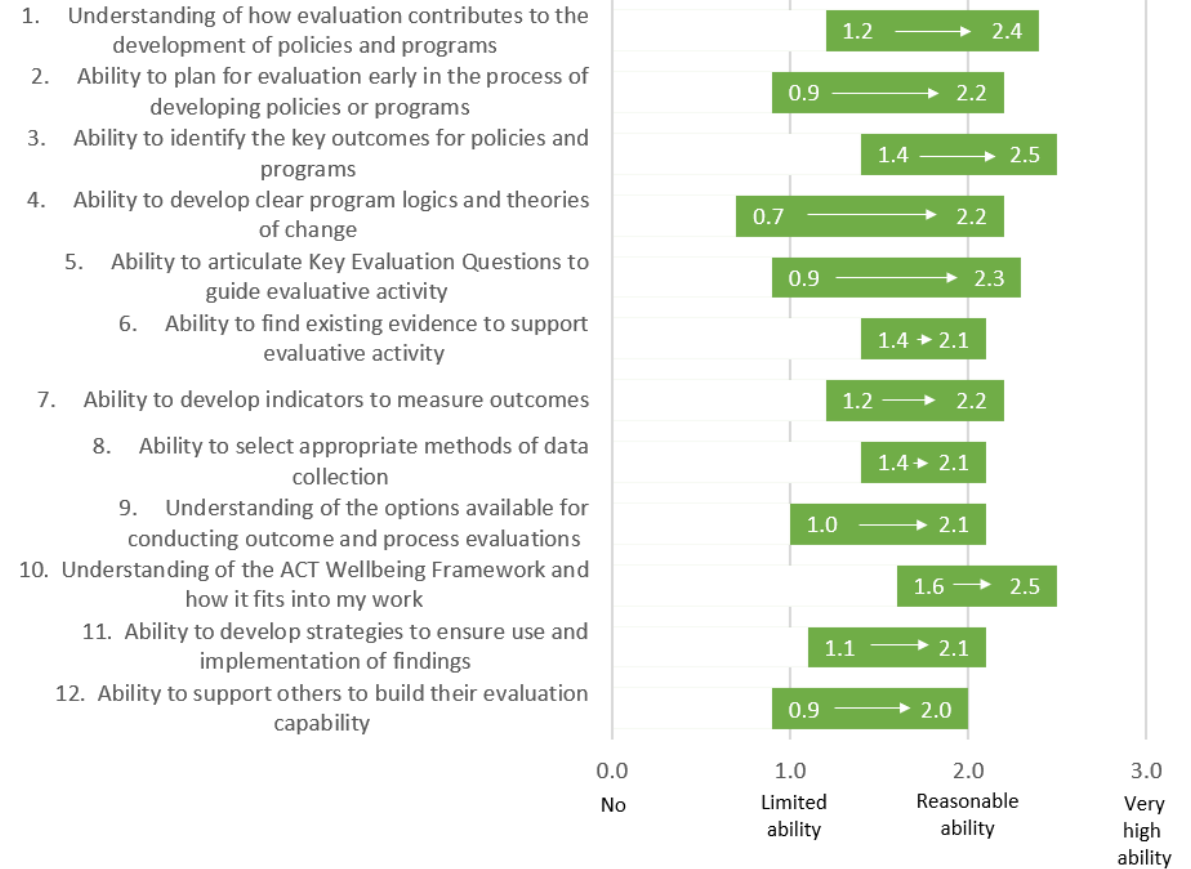
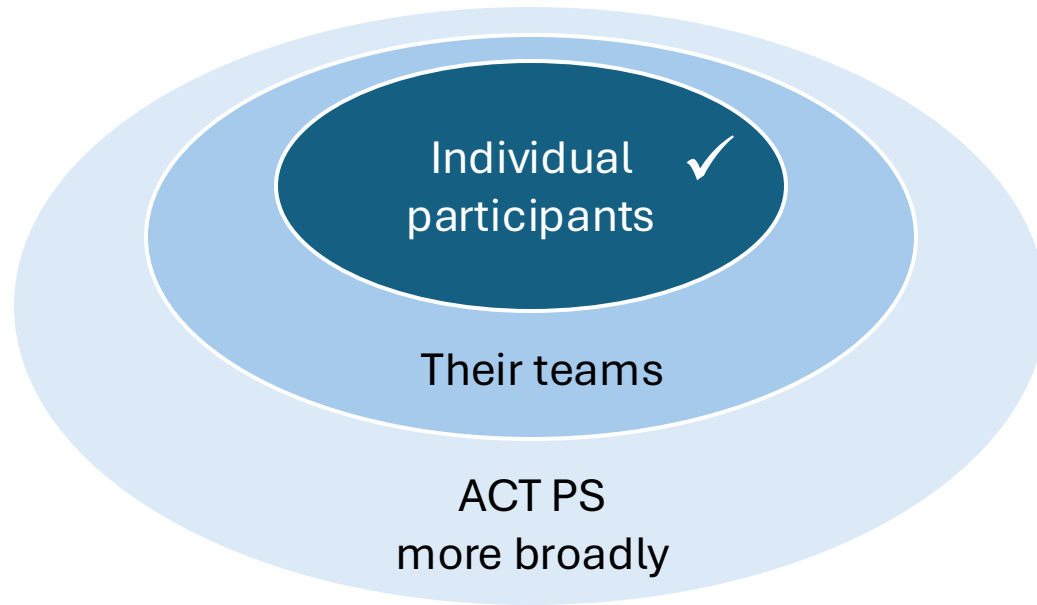
- Trade-off: depth with a smaller cohort vs more superficial with a larger cohort
- Key risk: capability walks
- Key assumption: the ripple effect / trickle down and out

## 2. Theory of change



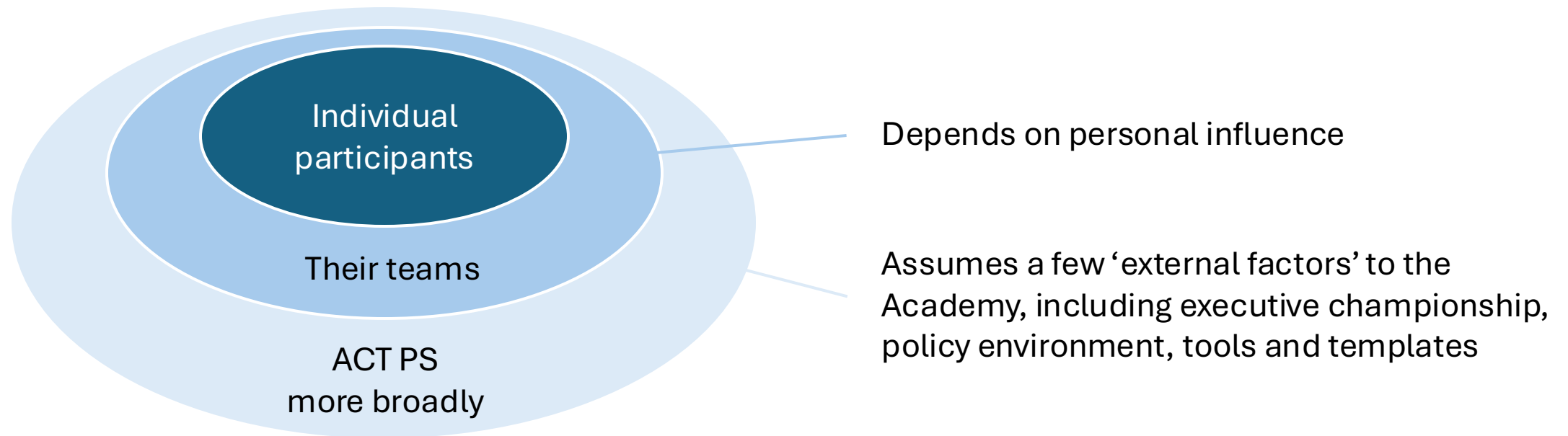
Key assumption: the ripple effect / trickle down and out

### 3. Outcomes and enablers



Key assumption: the ripple effect / trickle down and out

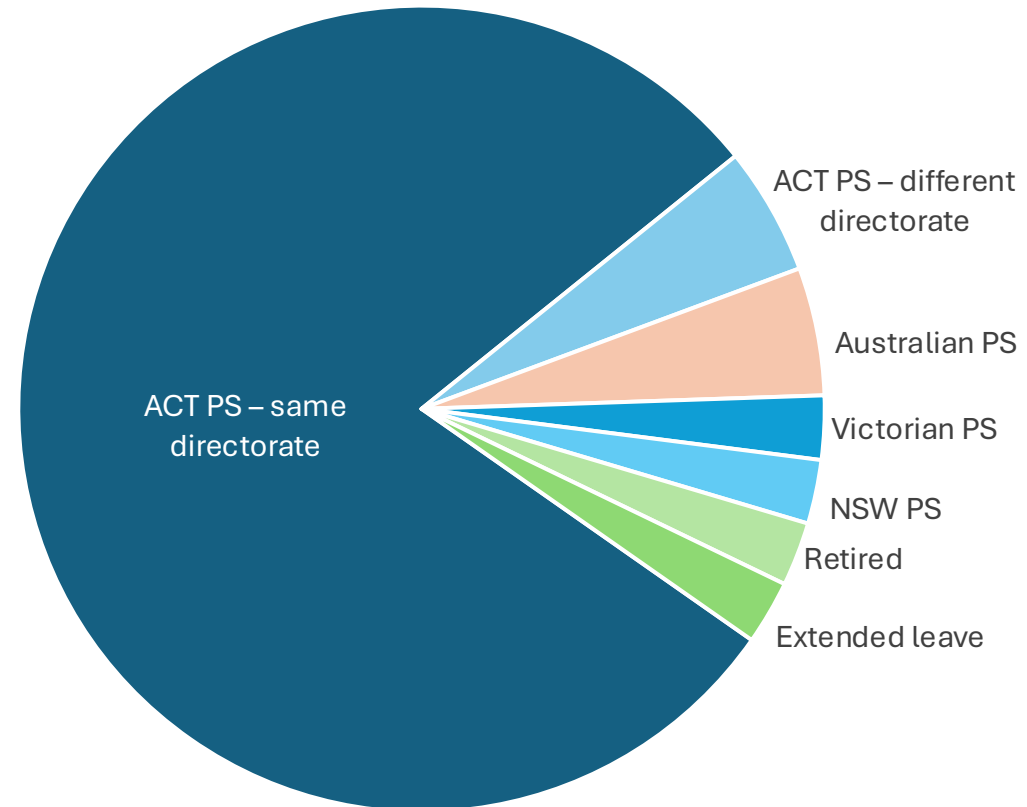
### 3. Outcomes and enablers



Key assumption: the ripple effect / trickle down and out

### 3. Outcomes and enablers

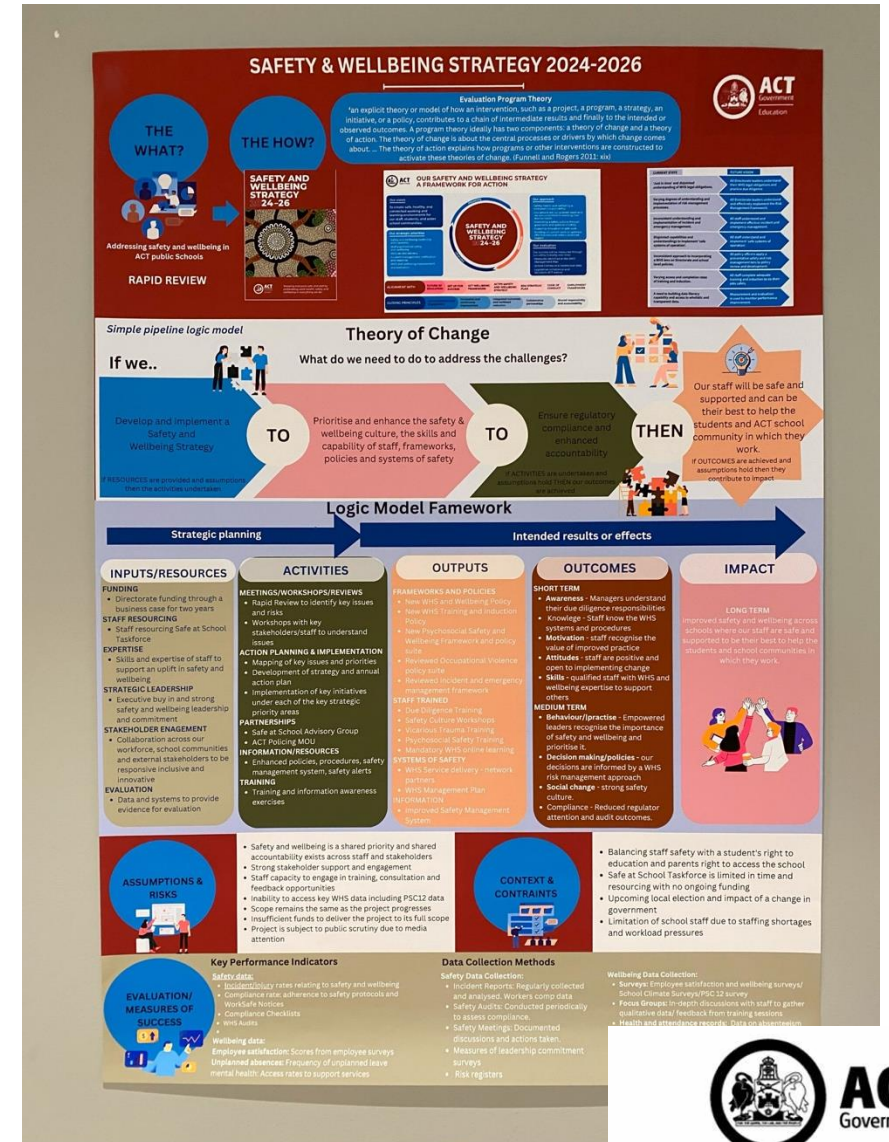
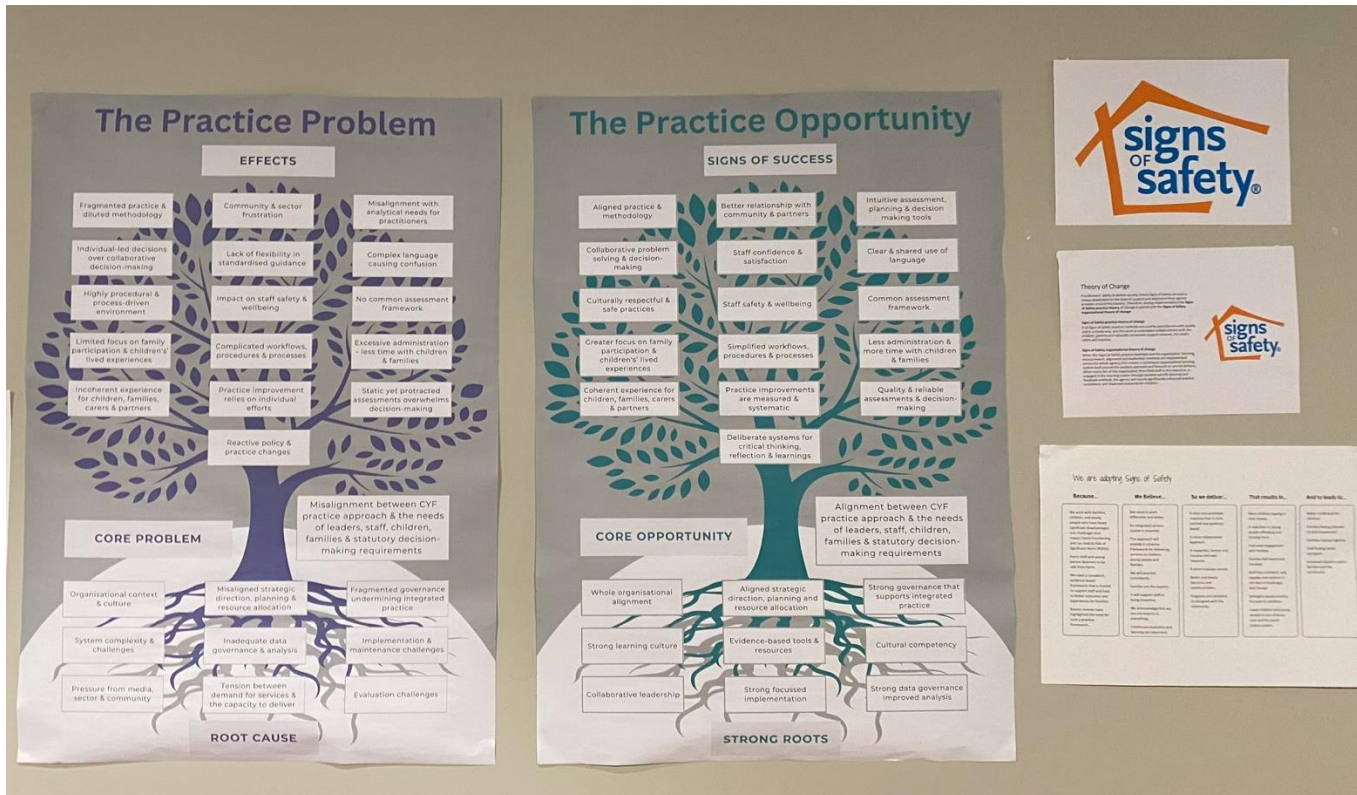
2021 and 2022 cohorts: where are they now?



Key risk: capability walks?

### 3. Outcomes and enablers

Significant project-level benefits from whatever the participants selected as their Academy Project



### 3. Outcomes and enablers

Other key enablers:

- Expertise and practice experience of the facilitators and coaches
- Iterative approach supported by annual reflection cycle (incl end of year report)
- High trust relationship between CMTEDD and the team at UTS
- Wellbeing framework as driver and trigger for evolution

**Evaluating Projects and Programs Across the Emergency Services Agency**  
Executive Pitch  
Megan Davis ASM - Senior Director ESA Programs

**PURPOSE**  
Evaluative thinking will support and assist the Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in the provision of the following services to the ACT Community:  
• ACT Ambulance Service  
• ACT Fire and Rescue Service  
• State Emergency Service  
• Rural Fire Service  
• Enabling Services

The ESA's responsibilities under the ACT Emergencies Act 2004 are vital to supporting the ACT Community through an emergency and include:  
• Prevention and Mitigation  
• Preparedness  
• Response  
• Recovery

**IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION**  
The evaluation of the outcomes of projects and programs in the ACT supports future policy design and decision making to benefit the overall wellbeing of all Canberra residents.

The ACT Wellbeing Framework Domains<sup>1</sup> impacted by ESA projects and programs:

**ESTABLISHING EVALUATION IN THE ESA**

1. **START SMALL**  
Start evaluating small projects
2. **LIST & LISTEN**  
Use external and internal expertise to shape how evaluation can work
3. **LEARN AND REFLECT**  
Define processes and build an evidence base
4. **SHOW AND SHARE**  
Communicate findings and learnings
5. **EVALUATION COMMUNITY**  
Embed evaluation into business planning and project management cycles

Evaluation should be built into business planning, funding and project management cycles. Evaluation needs to be identified early to ensure the appropriate resources and methods are considered and resourced.

**EVALUATION - BUSINESS PLANNING TO PROJECT DELIVERY**

Diagram showing the integration of evaluation into business planning and project delivery. Key stages include: IDENTIFICATION, BUSINESS CASE, EVALUATION PLAN, EVALUATION, PROJECT DELIVERY, and EVALUATION REPORT. The process is linked to the ACT Wellbeing Framework Domains: PERSONAL WELLBEING, COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING, ECONOMIC WELLBEING, and CULTURAL WELLBEING.

**CALL-TO-ACTION**

- Recommend small projects for initial evaluation to commence across the ESA
- Engage with evaluative thinking and processes
- ESA Project Management Office will engage with the Executive to promote and embed evaluation
- Support evaluation initiatives with members of your team

**REFERENCES:**  
1. ACT Wellbeing Framework ACT Government, 2019  
2. https://www.fire.act.gov.au/act-emergencies-act-2004

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