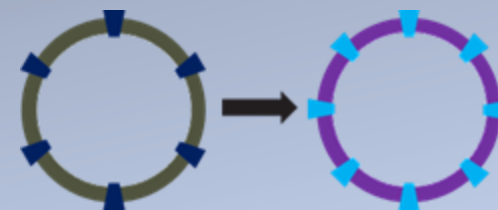




Embedding utilisation-focused, realist developmental evaluation into senior organisational leadership

An older and wiser ten-year update



AES Conference
16 September 2025

Acknowledgement of country



About us



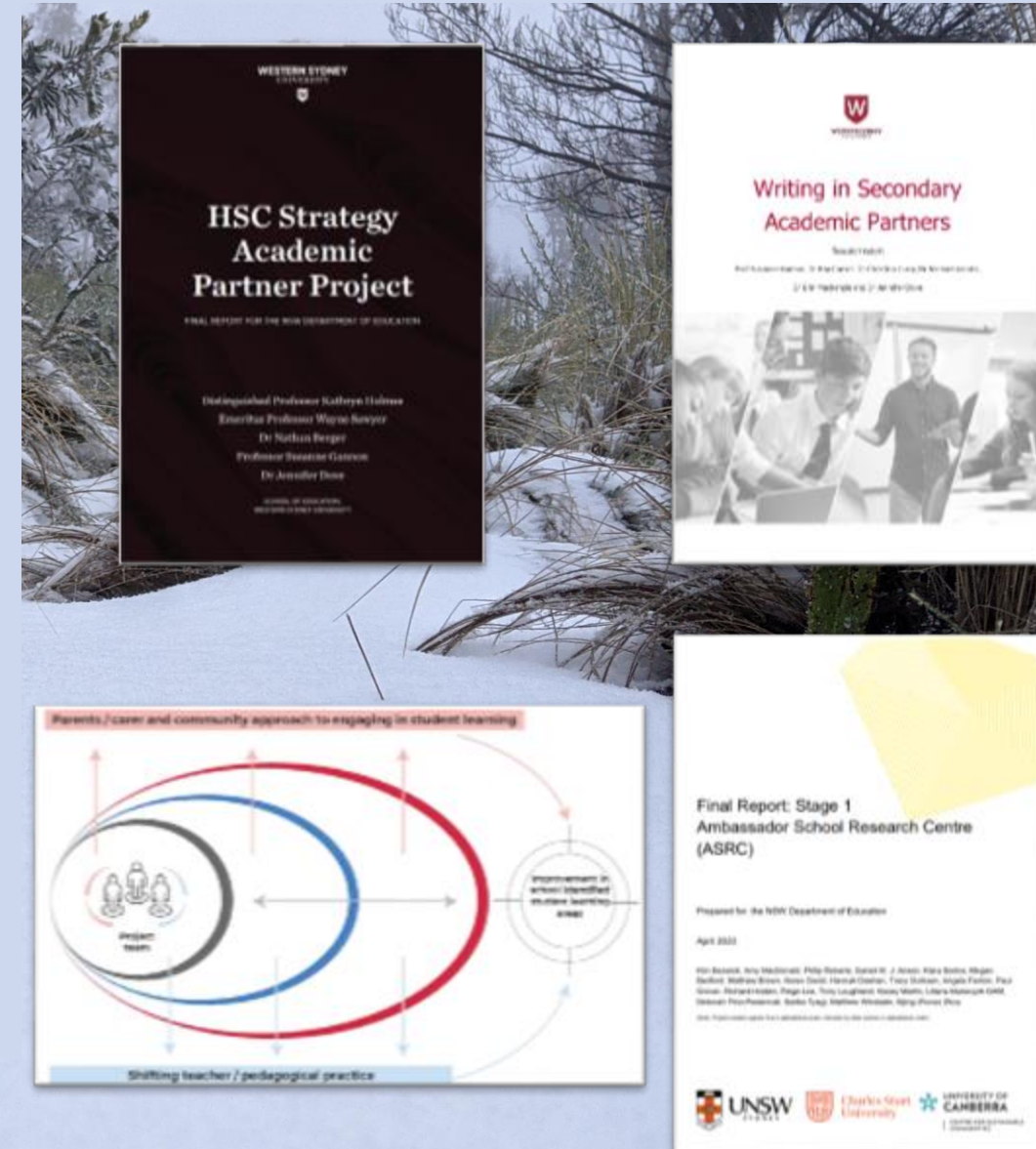
- Senior educational leader
 - State and federal education, policy, and advocacy - voracious user of evaluation
 - Knows Helen Timperley
 - Former Director, QTP (Quality Teaching Practice)
- Now Deputy Executive Director -
Education at Lutheran Education QLD



- Capital E Evaluator
- Realist Developmental Evaluation, ECB and utilisation-focused evaluation
- Also knows Helen Timperley after meeting Jo
- Former Manager, Evaluation and Data, QTP (Quality Teaching Practice)
- Now Manager Research and Evaluation at Transport for NSW

Quality Teaching Practice

- Innovation unit within in NSW Department of Education running from 2019-2024
- Programs included:
 - **HSC Strategy** to improve achievement in capstone Higher Schools Certificate qualification (year 12)
 - **Writing in Secondary** to lift academic writing in Stages 4 and 5 in specific subjects (History, PDHPE, Science and Visual Arts)
 - **Parent Partnerships Learning Ecosystems** to support schools' engagement with parents and carers for academic improvement
 - **Ambassador Schools** to build evidence base of effective practice from effective schools



Quality Teaching Practice



**Addressing
equity gaps**



**Teachers at the
heart**



**Research and
evaluation**

Two evaluation options?

External

Internal

REFEREED ARTICLE

Evaluation Journal of Australasia, Vol. 4 (new series), Nos. 1 & 2, March/April 2005, pp. 3–11

A fundamental choice: internal or external evaluation?

.....
Melissa Conley-Tyler

Melissa Conley-Tyler is an Associate with the Centre for Program Evaluation at the University of Melbourne. She became involved in evaluation after a decade of working in the non-profit sector in the US, South Africa and Australia, primarily in conflict resolution and violence reduction.

An organisation wishes to evaluate one of its programs. It can ask a staff member or hire someone outside the organisation. Which should it choose?

Surprisingly little guidance is available for this common scenario. A review of 30 texts dealing with organisational performance and evaluation shows that too often the issue is assumed one way or the other.

Management texts aimed at business and organisational audiences tend to presume that evaluation is conducted by internal evaluators, usually managers. By contrast the specialist

Three evaluation options

External

Program

Expert
evaluator/s

Internal

Program

Internal
(non-
expert)
evaluators

Embedded

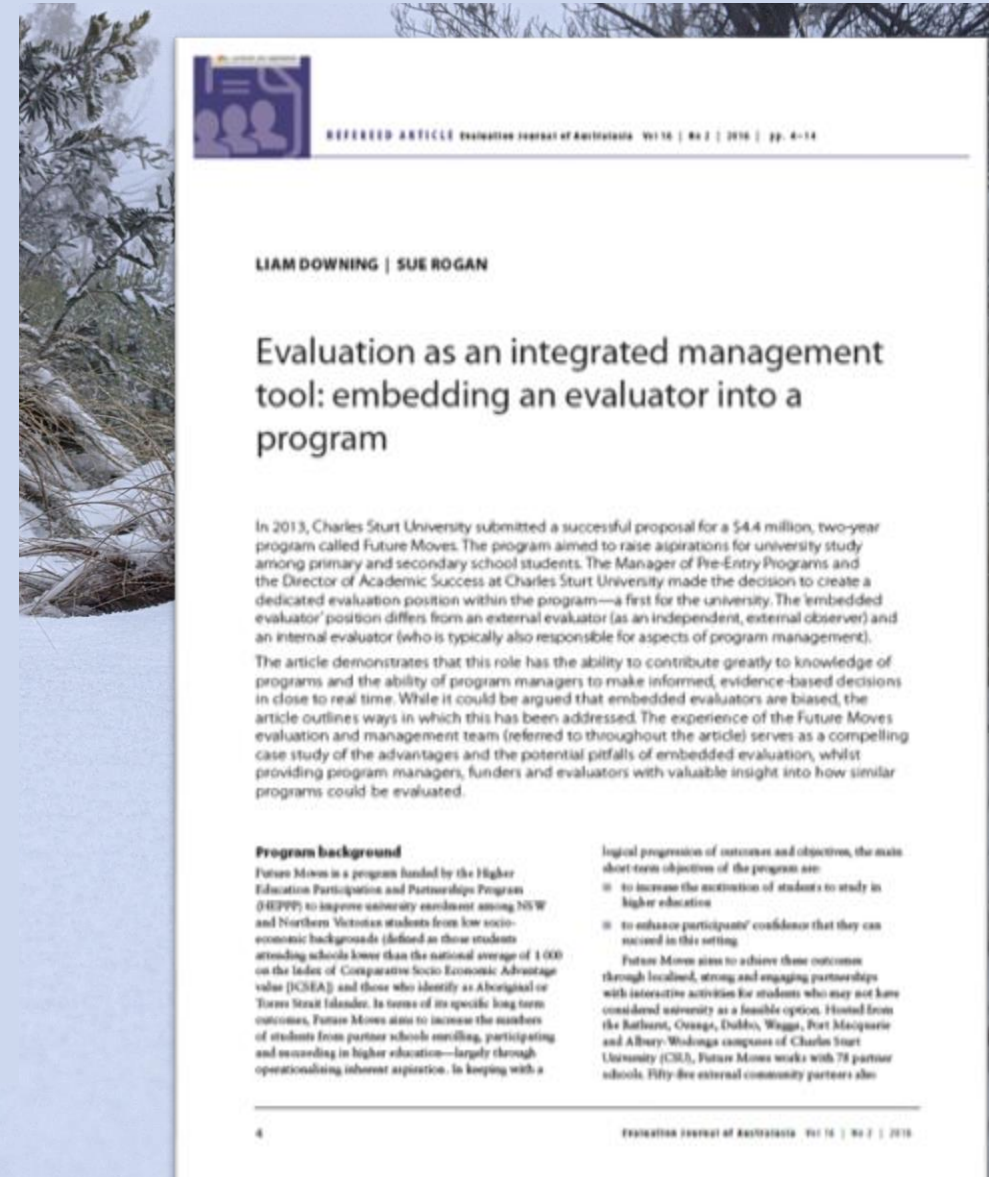
Program

Expert
evaluator/s

Embedded evaluation

A quick primer

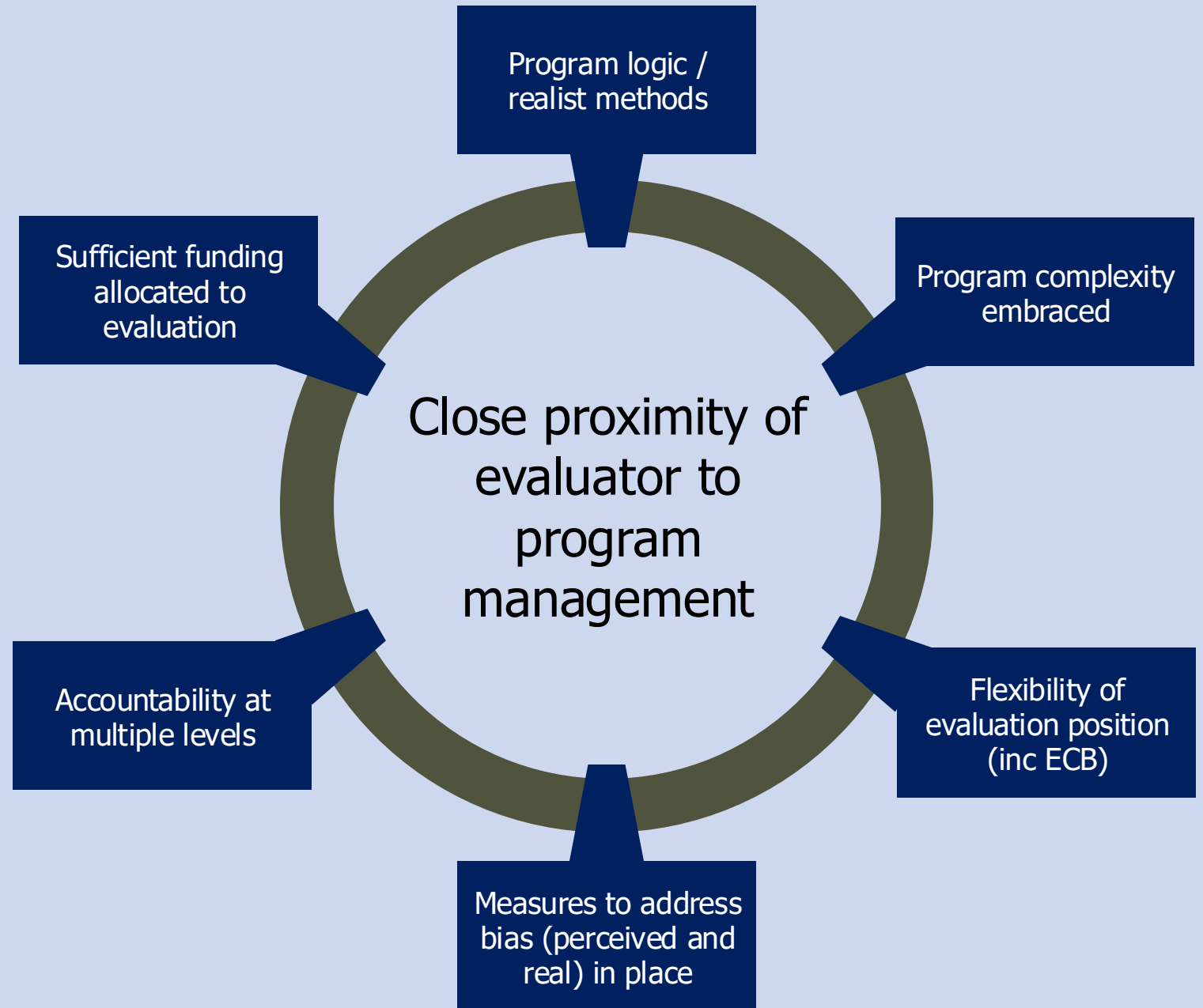
- Distinct from but built upon internal evaluation as described by Conley-Tyler (2005), Volkov (2011) and McCoy, Rose & Connolly (2013)
- Situates expert evaluation function within delivery unit
- Expert evaluators perform all evaluation activities within the unit
- Minimal to no commissioned evaluation



Embedded evaluation

2015 model

The 2015 model was designed for small-scale embedment of evaluation in a single higher education equity program, with 1-2 evaluators and 15-20 staff members.



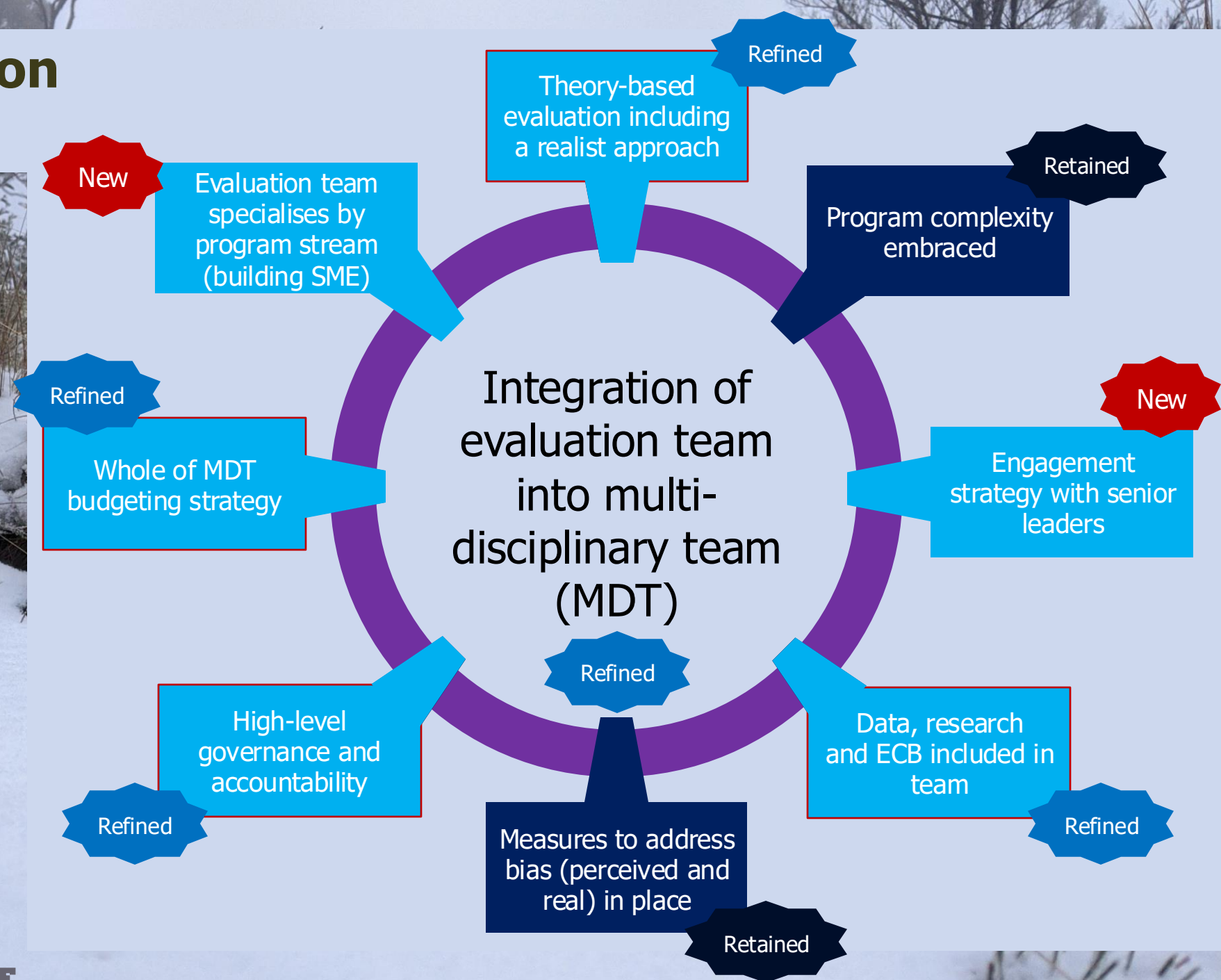
Embedded evaluation

Refinement

QTP Evaluation needed to account for greater:

- Complexity,
- Funding,
- Scrutiny,
- Politics,
- People, and
- Programs

... than the previous model could handle.

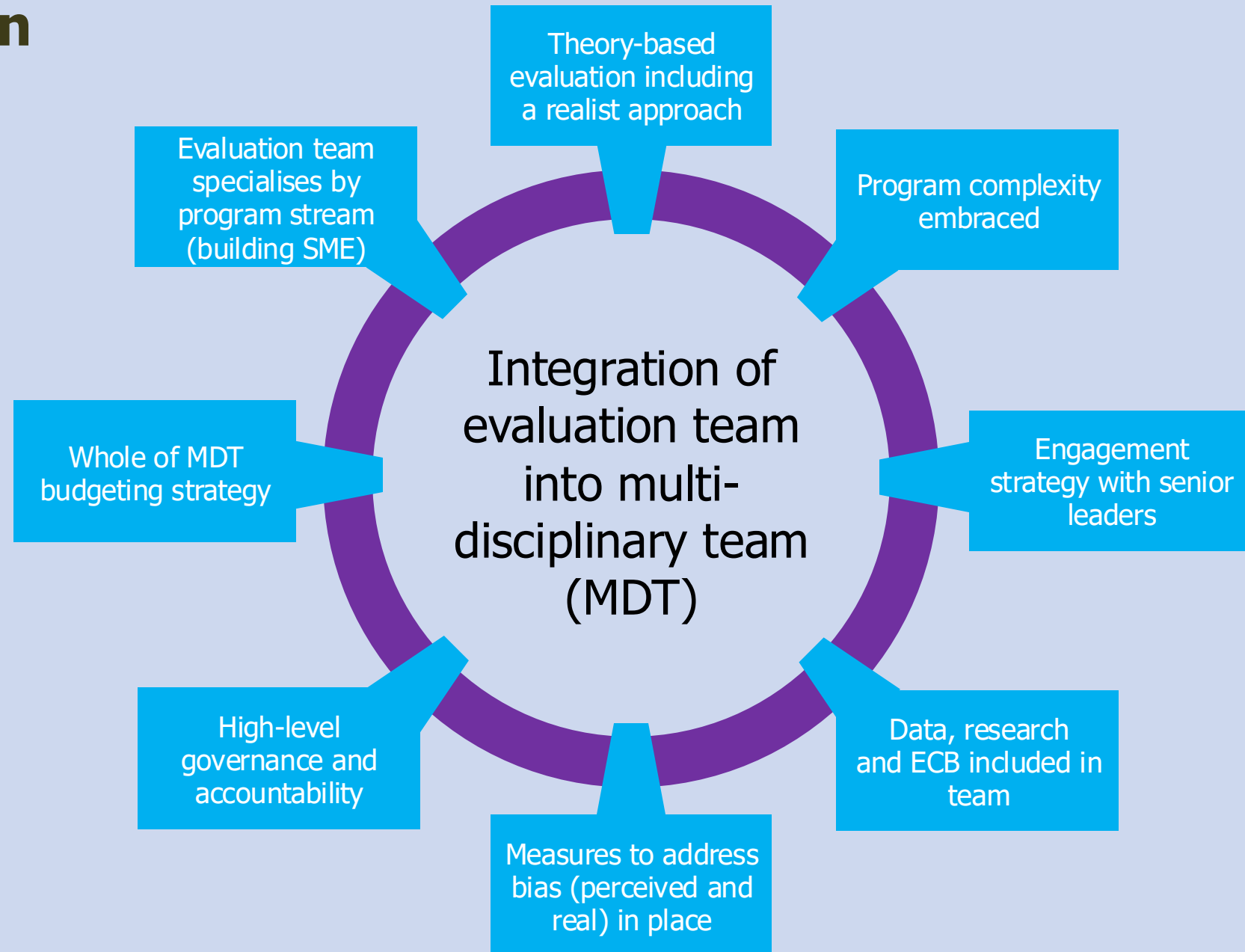


Embedded evaluation

2025 model

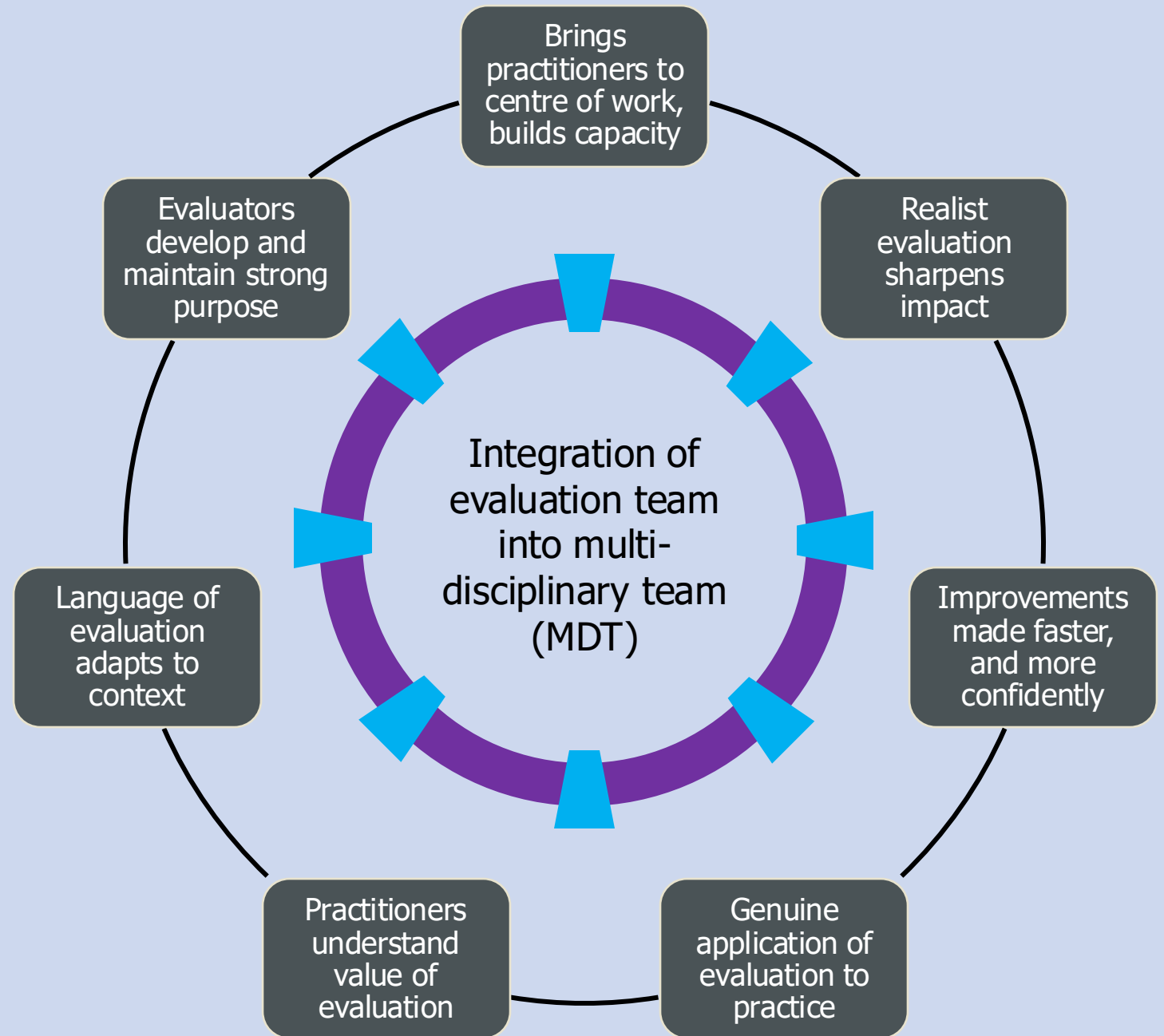
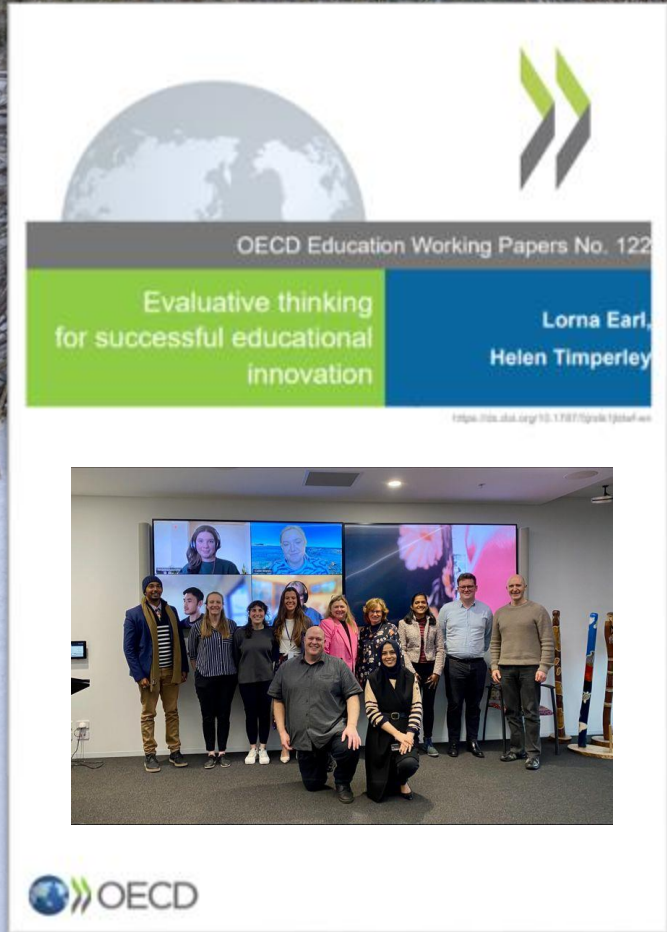
The 2025 model includes:

- Consideration of interaction between evaluation and an MDT
- Resourcing strategy that includes evaluation as non-negotiable component of MDT
- A specific strategy to engage senior leaders in meaningful evaluation
- A means of building subject matter expertise among evaluators.



Embedded evaluation

Affordances for leadership



Embedded evaluation: Our next steps



- Evaluation is a live question in Lutheran Education QLD
- Enthusiasm to learn and try
- Considering embedded evaluation and evaluative mindsets in early childhood education context
- BUT resourcing is a challenge



- Strong focus on building evaluative thinking (TfNSW and higher education)
- Engaged in lots of strategy and partnerships on evaluation
- Investigating embedded evaluation possibilities on smaller scale
- BUT resourcing is a challenge

Embedded evaluation: Discussion

Do you see possibility for this model in your work?

