The Australasian Evaluation Society is a professional organisation for people involved in evaluation. It has over 650 members involved in all aspects of evaluation and performance measurement. Members include evaluation practitioners, managers, teachers and students from all levels of government, educational institutions, research agencies, community organisations, businesses and interested individuals. Members meet regularly through Regional Groups in major cities in Australia and New Zealand.

The Society aims to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation through establishing and promoting ethics and standards in evaluation practice, providing a forum for the discussion of ideas including Society publications, seminars and conferences, linking members who have similar evaluation interests, providing education and training in matters related to evaluation, recognising outstanding contributions to the theory and/or practice of evaluation, acting as an advocate for evaluation in Australasia, and other activities consistent with its aims.

The purpose of the Evaluation Journal of Australasia is to further the aims of the AES by publishing articles of professional merit on any subject connected with evaluation, together with news and information of professional interest to members of AES. Preference is given to articles that embody original concepts, significantly new findings or methodological advances, or which present existing knowledge in a form particularly accessible or useful to students, practitioners and/or users of evaluation. The journal is intended to be critical and intellectually rigorous, but at the same time readable and accessible to the widest possible range of scholars and practitioners.

Also in this issue...
- Reflections on 2003 Conference
- Conference keynote addresses
- AES Awards
- Inaugural Fellows of the AES
- Book reviews

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Australasian Evaluation Society
International Conference 2004

11–15 October 2004
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
Stamford Grand Hotel, Glenelg

Conference
Pre-conference workshops
13, 14, 15 October
11, 12 October

Theme
Diverse voices in evaluation
• Cultural diversity
• Stakeholder diversity
• Evaluation diversity
• Contemporary issues

Sub-themes
• Cultural diversity
• Stakeholder diversity
• Evaluation diversity
• Contemporary issues

International speakers
Professor Murray Saunders is Professor of Evaluation in Work and Education and Director of the Centre for the Study of Education and Training (CSET), Lancaster University, United Kingdom. Murray is past president of the UK Evaluation Society and his evaluation consultancies include a wide range of cultural contexts in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Dr Hazel Symonette is Senior Policy and Planning Analyst at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Recently elected to the national Board of Directors of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), Hazel has served the past three years as co-chairs of the AEA’s Building Diversity Initiative and of the Minority (now Multi-Ethnic) Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest group.

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‘Ngadlu wanggandi marni na budni Kaurna yertaanna’
(We welcome you to Kaurna country)
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EDITORIAL

In 2003, the Australasian Evaluation Society celebrated 21 years of conferences and 16 years as a formally registered professional association. Along with associations in the US and Canada, the AES was one of the first professional evaluation societies. It now joined by a rapidly growing number of associations and societies in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia. As in all voluntary associations, the AES has had its ups and downs. But throughout its history, it has been strongly supported by a wide range of individuals committed to improving the theory and practice of evaluation, particularly in Australasia. This issue of the EJA provides several articles which reflect on the history of the AES and evaluation in Australasia, providing a strong knowledge and experiential base on which to move forward.

Fellows

In celebrating the history of the AES, it is timely to focus on contribution and achievement. In 2003, the Society celebrated not only longevity but also contribution through the establishment of a special category of membership – Fellows – recognising the outstanding members of the Society. Initially, the Society has selected five inaugural Fellows, with the intention of adding to this group on an annual basis.

Historical Perspectives on Evaluation Project

On of the roles of the Fellows will be to continue to contribute to the Society’s activities, particularly through projects identified as priorities by the Board. In this issue of the EJA, we have the initial results from the first of these projects, the Historical Perspectives on Evaluation. This has been initiated by two Fellows, Colin Sharp and Ian Trotman, and the background to it is outlined in Colin’s introduction to the project. In this issue of the EJA, we present three papers emanating from the project. Colin’s article reflects on the development of evaluation as a professional activity in Australia, with particular reference to the evolution of the Society within a broader social policy context. In this article, he builds on work commenced in 1992 and draws from the knowledge of a number of long serving members. Ian’s first paper takes a look back at the Society’s activities from a New Zealand perspective, particularly in the years 1989–1999. Ian’s story of the AES over these years, during which he played a central role, makes very interesting reading about both the development of evaluation as a profession but also the trials and tribulations in the development of professional association. Ian’s second paper focuses specifically on the Society’s work in developing an ethical code of practice and guidelines for program evaluation. The success of these endeavours is a great testament to the perserverance of a number of AES members. Together these papers, and several others which will come out of this project, provide an invaluable record of the Society’s short but proud past.

Context of Evaluation

Two of the keynote addresses of the 2003 Conference are provided in this issue. Continuing on the theme of reflecting on the development of evaluation as a profession, Nicoletta Stame, Vice-President of the European Evaluation Society, has produced a very illuminating picture of how the national and international policy context dramatically influences the practice of evaluation, using the European Union as an excellent example. Given the ‘onion-layered’ bureaucracy which exists in the European Union, I feel blessed to work in a country where we have only three layers of government, and evaluators practising in New Zealand must feel extremely lucky to have even fewer there. By investigating another context in which evaluation must work, the inter-cultural context, Russell Taylor, from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, reminds us how evaluation is so context dependent. Building on the indigenous theme which the AES has adopted as a strategic priority and the 2003 Conference selected as a central theme, Russell presents a frank challenge to the AES to be more proactive in ensuring that evaluation studies take appropriate consideration of the inter-cultural setting in which they occur. Issues of ethics, stakeholders rights, appropriate methodology, and training of indigenous people in evaluation, are all addressed in Russell’s paper.

2004 AES Conference in Adelaide

The indigenous theme is continued in the 2004 Conference to be held in Adelaide from 13–15 October, which is ‘Diverse Voices in Evaluation’. The conference will be at the Stamford Grand Hotel in Glenelg, where it was so successfully held in 1997. I am sure this conference will continue the run of very stimulating and successful AES conferences and I hope to see you there.

Tribute to Doug

This is the last issue on which Doug Fraser will be an editor. Doug has been an outstanding editor and has put an enormous amount of work and dedication to the EJA. He has worked diligently to ensure each issue is timely and of a high quality but also carefully constructed to ensure the content remains accessible to the broad and diverse membership of the Society. His contribution will be missed but he leaves a legacy which will carry on.

Rick Cummings

Editor

The production of this issue of the EJA has been delayed for some considerable time. As lead editor for this issue of the EJA, I take responsibility for this and apologise to subscribers. In order to get the EJA back on track, the Publications Committee plans to bring out a double issue 4 (1&2) before the end of 2004. The Journal will then return to standard practice of two issues a year – one mid year and one at the end of the calendar year.
For the AES, 2003 has been a year with some notable events and milestones in the life of the society.

A highlight for me in 2003 was representing the AES at the Inaugural Assembly of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation held in Lima, Peru in March. This was a highly stimulating as well as challenging event. It was reassuring to witness and participate in an international meeting where a large group of people from all over the world were able to work together in a constructive and positive way. I came away heartened that in a conflict torn world at least a diverse group of evaluators were able to discuss and energetically debate issues with each other and reach a successful conclusion. An IOCE Board was elected at the Assembly and is currently in the process of carrying out all the tasks associated with setting up the organisation with a website planned for 2004.

The AES has made steady progress in terms of the strategic priorities that the Board identified at the beginning of the year. The Annual Conference in Auckland made a particularly significant contribution in the area of indigenous evaluation. This was the result of long hours of hard work by Maggie Jacob-Hoff and the organising committee. We must now face up to the challenges raised during the conference for us as individuals and as a professional community to be as all-embracing and supportive as possible to the development of indigenous evaluation and evaluation practitioners. I would like to thank all the speakers and participants who helped raise our collective awareness through speaking frankly and openly about the issues we face as evaluators when working with indigenous people. This will be an area for fruitful discussions for some time if we are to make significant progress and it therefore remains as a key priority for the Board for this year.

For many years the AES has recognised contributions to the field of evaluation and this year was no exception. So it was a real pleasure for me to have the honour of presenting the Annual Awards at the conference dinner and to induct the six inaugural AES Fellows. The Awards are a formal acknowledgement for recent outstanding contributions to the theory and practice of evaluation and it is always a hard job for the Awards Committee to decide between the applicants. The Fellowships provide recognition for members who have made an exceptional and long-standing contribution to the Society and to evaluation. It is expected that one or two fellowships will be awarded in each subsequent year.

Professional development workshops have continued throughout this year. It’s worth remembering that members pay substantially reduced rates for workshops and non-members can join the AES when registering. Not only are they an effective way of acquiring valuable knowledge and skills but they are also a marvellous way to extend your professional networks. More workshops have been conducted and even more are planned for the end of 2004 so watch out for postings about these for your region in E-News. New ideas are always welcome so please contact the Chair of the Training and Professional Development Committee or any member of your regional committee if you have a particular workshop topic in mind.

The continued development and strength of the society relies on a critical mass of motivated, enthusiastic and dedicated people to give their time and contribute to the various activities. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the commitment and hard work of the office bearers, committees, members and other supporters. New contributions are always welcome so if you’ve been thinking about becoming more closely involved in AES activities - this is a good time to do it!

Our next opportunity to get together as a professional community is in the second week of October in Adelaide. The conference committee are busy organising what promises to be a terrific programme under the theme of ‘Diverse Voices in Evaluation’. I look forward to seeing many of you there where we can all not only hear but also speak as one of those voices!

Penny Hawkins
President
The Historical Perspectives on Evaluation project

A teenager, approaching the magical twenty years might be expected to ask: ‘Where have I come from? Why am I different?’ With over 21 years of National (and International) Evaluation Conferences behind it the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES), which is still only a teenager, is expected to ask these questions. Indeed, at the recent Auckland Conference it venerated its oldies, and bestowed on some of them the title of ‘Fellow’, including the role of searching for answers to these and similar questions on behalf of the AES. It was also clear from some misconceptions and incorrect mathematics that there are still a significant number of practitioners of evaluation, and AES members, who are in need of some answers.

The paper that follows is part of the quest of some of the AES Fellows and others in developing responses to these questions for the AES and interested evaluation practitioners. This quest actually started in 1991 in preparation for the 1992 International Evaluation Conference held in Melbourne, which marked the tenth anniversary of National Evaluation Conferences in Australia. But evaluation has a longer, less widely known, history in Australia and New Zealand, especially in the disciplines of health, education and training. To mark that milestone the Australasian Evaluation Society (which officially commenced in 1987) commissioned me (with the assistance of Anne Lindsay) to prepare an ‘Interim History of Evaluation in Australasia and the AES’. The draft paper was presented to AES members and conference attendees for discussion over several months, but was never formally published.
The 2003 AES Auckland International Evaluation Conference represented the 21st year of these generic evaluation conferences, and the AES Publications Committee has agreed to revisit the ‘Interim History’ for inclusion in the Evaluation Journal of Australasia. At the conference I was assisted by another Fellow, Ian Trotman, in the recruitment of contributors to a New Zealand perspective. Based on the recent forays into historical and other perspectives from the New Zealand experience (see Lunt, Davidson & McKegg, 2003; Ryan, 2003) Ian, our excellent Editorial Assistant, Dr Herbert Stock, and I thought that the material was already too bulky with Australian content so it might be best to separate them for this issue of the EJA, leaving a more integrative approach for the proposed monograph and AES history.

As I alluded in the last issue of the EJA for 2002, the present issue of the EJA is also dedicated to the contribution and memory of the pioneers of evaluation in Australasia, many of whom were active in evaluation before it became fashionable or mandatory. Unfortunately, much of the early work of these pioneers is largely unknown and/or inaccessible to the current wider evaluation community. It is my hope that the AES will implement the recommendation put in the 1992 ‘Interim History’ to establish a fitting commemoration of their efforts and contributions, in the form of an archive of evaluation related papers and memorabilia.

The three papers which follow are part of the attempt to develop a monograph reflecting those roots and it will include a review of papers to be made available in archives. Some of us ‘AES oldies’ propose to donate our collections of papers, and some inherited from colleagues who passed them on hoping that they would be of use to others. For example, material has come from the late Dr Elaine Martin, of Flinders University, School of Social Administration and Social Work, who was a modest leader in evaluation theory and practice in social welfare. Indeed she conducted the first workshop on evaluation that I ever organised, twenty years ago, and was one of my mentors in evaluation theory and practice in social welfare. Indeed she conducted the first workshop on evaluation that I ever organised, twenty years ago, and was one of my mentors in evaluation theory and practice. We need to debrief such leaders in the field while their papers and recollections are still available. In addition to a generic archive held centrally, there may be regional archives (e.g. in New Zealand). We also propose to develop a website for a history of the AES; a series of biographies of leading evaluation practitioners could also be part of a website. In this issue of the EJA we have provided a small selection of material drawn from these growing resources. We hope it will inspire evaluation practitioners to delve deeper into the lessons of the past, and to provide a firm foundation for continuous improvement in evaluation theory and practice in Australasia.

Acknowledgements

The ‘Interim History’ received many responses as part of the 1992 conference and thereafter. Although there is too much of that extra detail for this paper, we are pleased to be able to incorporate much of that material and feedback into the forthcoming monograph and the archives which are still under construction. This process must continue. Indeed, we are blessed by the encouragement and assistance of many colleagues and patient advisers, especially the following who have assisted in various ways throughout the process:

Dr Anona Armstrong (ET&S, Vic.); Dr Herbert Stock (FIPPM, Flinders University), Dr Ralph Straton (Murdoch University, WA); Ian Trotman (Wellington Evaluation Group, NZ) and Jerome Winston (RMIT, Vic.). The several helpful Librarians of Flinders University, RM IT (Central and TAFE sections), University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne (Baillieu Reference Section and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Library) and the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development (formerly in Leabrook, S.A.; now NCVER in the city of Adelaide).

Of course, I take responsibility for the content which may not represent the views of each of the contributors, the Australasian Evaluation Society or its Publications Committee.

References


Development of program evaluation in Australia and the Australasian Evaluation Society – the early decades

The year 2003 marks the 21st year of the series of National Evaluation Conferences (NECs) and international conferences, as well as the sixteenth year of the AES. This paper is not intended as a full history, nor as a dossier of the AES per se; that is for another time and place. Rather, it seeks both to reflect on whether there is a distinctive flavour of public sector program evaluation in the antipodes, and to give an overview of how evaluation developed in Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand. This will require the opening up and examination of the historical roots of program evaluation in Australia and of some aspects of current practice.

This paper, like the majority of the literature on which it is based, focuses on program evaluation in the public sector. There have been many other guises of evaluation in government, such as Corbett’s (1991, p.3) ‘industry of external review’, and the long tradition of ‘Inspectorates’ in Australia’s and New Zealand’s education systems. I also had to draw the line between the public sector and the not-for-profit or third sector, although that sector has made important contributions to program evaluation in Australia, for example in grass roots self-evaluation.

Precursors: program evaluation in Australia before the National Evaluation Conferences

Prescribed or compulsory government program evaluation in Australia is not a recent development. Indeed, there were a number of attempts in the 1950s and 1960s and earlier to introduce large-scale program evaluation as recommended or prescribed policy and practice, particularly in the community-oriented educational fields of Agricultural Extension and Technical and Further Education. Evaluation practices were also adopted in the social work and health disciplines by the early to mid-1970s. However, notwithstanding these and other early pioneers, program evaluation cannot be considered to have become a major government commitment or priority in Australia until the
watershed enquiries known as the Coombs Report and the Baume Report.

The Coombs Report
The first of these reviews was the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (RCAGA, 1976), known as the Coombs Report or Coombs Commission. Not only did this study pave the way for program evaluation, but it was also among the most instructive Australian government inquiries in identifying organisational diagnosis, and a form of benchmarking, as vital aspects of improvement of public sector administration. The Commission's Task Force on Efficiency described an agenda of reform, including performance audit and new public management, which took a generation to be addressed.

Baume Report 'Through a glass darkly'
The other watershed in terms of evaluation came with the Fraser Government's commissioning of the Baume Report, the Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare (SSCSW, 1979a) entitled Through a glass darkly. Although it was a review of evaluation in Australian health and welfare services, it had far-reaching effects. Not only was this study an influential social reform vehicle, it also provided successive governments with a recommended definition of program evaluation for the whole of government, as 'the process of thoroughly and critically reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of any program or group of programs' (SSCSW, 1979a, p.5, emphasis added).

In introducing the criterion of appropriateness, the Baume report suggested, inter alia, that appropriateness was 'the extent to which the program is in accordance with the moral, ethical and social norms of the time...' (Gross, 1979, p. 58, italics original). However, with governments becoming more wary of the independence and authority of the public sector, the interpretation of appropriateness soon became firmly grounded in 'Government policy' (Department of Finance, 1992a).

As well as these Commonwealth Parliamentary inquiries, there were a number of state government and commonwealth departmental and non-governmental reviews. The Australian Schools Commission established a national system of research and evaluation for its new programs (see below). The move to devolve autonomy and management to schools was accompanied by institutionalised self-evaluation as well as building a higher profile for evaluation in government policy and administration (see Caldwell, 1998; 2002; Wall, 1987). Similar developments in school-based evaluation occurred in Tasmania (Caldwell, 2002). The government of Tasmania also commissioned a review of evaluation methods which could be applied in its welfare services (see Jamrozik & Hooke, 1975).

At the departmental level in the Commonwealth Government, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (1977) promoted a debate on the underlying philosophies of evaluation with its report Evaluating the Helping Services. In the same year the Australian Council of Social Service established an Evaluation and Accountability Task Force to facilitate a capability and commitment to evaluation among the local level non-government agencies. This had a profound influence on the Senate Standing Committee inquiry, especially in the establishment of the definition of evaluation used in the Baume Report, which subsequently influenced the Commonwealth Department of Finance's concept of evaluation for the whole of government.

In tracing the history of evaluation in Australia from Federation to the Whitlam Government, the Baume Report rather overstated the impression that it 'showed that there was almost no formal evaluation during this time' (SSCSW, 1979a, p. 19). Nevertheless it was a positive contribution to articulate that the main prerequisites for systematic planning and evaluation are:

- determination of needs;
- delineation of goals and objectives for programs and groups of programs;
- delineation of criteria or standards for evaluating progress toward those objectives and for assessing the competing claims of proposed programs;
- development of a database for providing measures of those criteria, through a process of monitoring the program; and
- application or appropriate use of findings.

The report further noted that when social welfare programs were formulated and implemented before 1970, 'one or two of these prerequisites were observed sometimes but seldom all five together' (SSCSW, 1979a, p.19).

The Baume Report also commented on the 1969 Nimmo Report (the Commonwealth Enquiry into Health Insurance) as being the 'best evaluation document' up to 1973. While the Nimmo Report met at least some of their criteria, it was 'far from ideal as an evaluation report. However, considering that evaluation was not widely discussed and understood at that time, the inquiry was certainly a step forward.' (SSCSW, 1979a, p. 22).

However, the Baume review did not mention the Royal Commission on Public Service Administration (1918-1920) or the Royal Commission to Consider and Report Upon the Public Expenditure of the Commonwealth of Australia (1918–1921), although both met at least a few of the criteria noted above. Similarly, the report overlooked a considerable body of evaluations in agricultural extension and TAFE, and the importance of the Schools Commission in establishing a national educational evaluation system.

The key claim in the report which I wish to reconsider here, that 'there is no tradition of evaluation in Australia' (SSCSW, 1979a, p.109), may have been influenced by comparison with the
USA and by the focus on the health and welfare sectors. Nonetheless, during the period of the Baume Report there seemed to be an increased interest in the establishment of evaluation within government organisations, including the Commonwealth Department of Social Security, the South Australian Department of Community Welfare and the Western Australian Department for Community Welfare, as well as within related professions such as social work.

Although all these evaluation-related reviews, and subsequent development of governments’ evaluation capacity, served to lift the level of commitment to, and the quality of, program evaluation, they still were piecemeal and demonstrated the point made in the Baume Report about the lack of a consistent framework and culture of evaluation. Subsequent to the Baume Report, there were various attempts to develop a consistent performance evaluation and management improvement framework in some state and national programs in Australia, but it was not made mandatory or endorsed as a whole-of-government policy until the late 1980s.

Although all these evaluation-related reviews served to lift the level of commitment to, and the quality of, program evaluation, they still were piecemeal and demonstrated the point made in the Baume Report about the lack of a consistent framework and culture of evaluation.

In three sub-fields of education, however, program (formative) evaluation became the prescribed (eventually mandatory) and widely implemented policy of the government agencies concerned. Therefore these fields (agricultural extension studies, state primary schools and TAFE) invite further attention regarding the question of distinctiveness, and perhaps to discover some lessons for today.

The era of Agricultural Extension Studies

Like the role of agricultural research in the development of statistical methods, agricultural extension provided opportunities which had a formative effect on the early approaches to program evaluation. Some of the current practitioners of program evaluation in the human services gained their experience through agricultural extension program evaluation. For example, Michael Quinn Patton was involved for many years in extension services through the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics at the University of Minnesota and was the Editor of the Journal of Extension.

In the USA, it had been the ‘dust bowl’ storms of the Great Depression that had laid these foundations (see Farquhar, 1961; 1963; Trotman, 2003). In Australia the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) Agricultural Extension was formed by the CSIRO, State and local authorities in 1947, with a deliberate research and evaluation strategy to test this program (Farquhar, 1961). The evaluation, carried out by designated evaluators, was reported in 1952 by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and ‘many lessons were learned from the careful evaluation of the MIA extension experiments ... probably the most significant was the lesson in agricultural organization’ (Farquhar, 1961, p. 210).

In the 1950s two social psychologists from the University of Melbourne, Professor Oeser and Dr Fred Emery, were active in sociological and psychological studies of rural communities as part of a UN ESCO world comparative study (Oeser & Emery, 1954). As a result of this association with CSIRO and the University of Melbourne Faculty of Agriculture, Oeser and Emery (1958) conducted a landmark study, published as Information Decision and Action, on the diffusion of innovation and decision-making among farmers.

In 1962 the CSIRO (on behalf of the Australian Agricultural Council) organised the second Federal Conference on Agricultural Extension Services. Attendees were interested in, and drew from, the tradition of agricultural extension in the USA where some of the early roots of program evaluation lie. Indeed, one member of the conference organising committee, Dr. Reginald Farquhar saw the benefit of grass-roots formative evaluation in agricultural extension programs in the USA, and advocated a similar approach in Australia.

In the heyday of the rural sociological studies, the University of Melbourne Notes on Agricultural Extension began in 1966 and formed the basis of some of the early debates and practices which were the forerunners of more formalised program evaluation. A useful summary of the early years of this work is provided by Parkin (1972).

The use of a standard model of program planning, specifically including evaluation, was introduced as early as 1956 in Queensland, and training in this model and its implementation became compulsory in NSW in 1968. Parkin elaborated on these processes by identifying the role of evaluation in linking the various stages, as the following ‘Guidelines for Planning of Programs’ showed, in four steps:

- **Situation Analysis**
  - Long term – fixed component
  - Long term – variable component
  - Short term – variable component

- **Objectives**
  - Long term
  - Short term

- **Workplan**
  - Objectives plan
  - Calendar of operations

- **Evaluation**
  Two key issues of the Agricultural Extension era which may provide clarification on current concerns in program evaluation were the prescription of formalised evaluation, and its professionalisation.
The prescription of formalised program evaluation in agricultural extension

It is not clear whether there ever really was a government directive to formalise program evaluation in most agricultural extension services. It seems that the strong conformity arose by virtue of the nature of the project work funded by the Commonwealth grants, which made extensive use of questionnaire survey feedback methodology, and the nationwide normative use of a uniform program planning and management model (see Parkin, 1972). However, evaluation was recognised to have an important role early in the development of the field.

The professionalisation and status of agricultural extension

By the 1962 national conference there were calls for professionalisation of agricultural extension. Indeed, part of the rationale and aims of that conference was ‘recognition of the need to develop further the profession of extension, to define qualities needed in extension workers, and to train extension workers accordingly’. However, there are some who believe that agricultural extension was always borderline as a profession, and ambivalent about its professional role, as illustrated by the myth that the extension expert was taught to ‘work yourself out of a job’ (Cary, personal communication, 1992).

Eventually the ‘profession’ did not survive the test. When the specific commonwealth funding was stopped and redistributed under the ‘New Federalism’ of the Fraser Government, the State governments spent the former extension allocations elsewhere.

Woog (1990) argued that agricultural extension went through a major change from the late 1970s. He claimed that ‘improvement did not occur for decades in agricultural extension practice because evaluation in that field emphasised methods and techniques without putting them in context. It has been further argued that where human activities are concerned, context must include the subjectivity and transient nature of human systems and the diversity of human values’ (p.247). In effect, he was emphasising that agricultural extension officers needed to develop skills in self-evaluation, ‘critiquing’ or ‘meta-evaluation’.

Evaluation in Education

More than ten federal and state-sponsored reviews between 1971 and 1984 inspired Byrne, Houston and Thomson (1984) to write that ‘government inquiries into education in Australia have been one of the few growth industries of recent years.’ Kerith Wall’s research for a Master in Education gives a local insight into the waxing and waning of program evaluation in the education system over a hundred years from the 1880s.

According to Wall’s review, an issue from the 1890s to 1920s was the ‘payment by results’ scheme which brought a performance appraisal function to the program evaluation role of school inspectors. The major change in program evaluation came with the Ramsay Report of 1960, which recommended that inspectors continue their inspectorial duties, but become more like advisors on professional matters (such as program evaluation) rather than assessors for performance appraisal of individual teachers.

The 1973 Karmel Report led to the establishment of the Schools Commission, which recommended seven programs in education across the country. From this came a national system of programs which were systematically researched and evaluated under the surveillance of a National Evaluation Committee, which had a significant budget and explored the wider implications of innovations as well as evaluating their effectiveness. This institutionalised evaluation in government policy and administration as never before in Australia.

The 1980s saw a trend towards devolution of school management, which was accompanied by an emphasis on self-evaluation of school curriculum and other programs. In 1983 the newly elected Cain Government made program evaluation in Victorian state schools the primary responsibility of the School Council, as a part of a process of devolution of accountability towards the community (see Caulley, 1988, Toner, 1983). Indeed, the Cain Government signalled that this devolution also meant a drive for efficiency and effectiveness using program evaluation in education. Other social services, such as community welfare services (see Toner, 1983), were soon to follow suit.

TAFE was one of the first mainstream public sector functions to make a strong commitment to organisational and system-wide evaluation, including prescribing program evaluation as a national system. This was separate from curriculum evaluation as part of course development, etc., which was also well established in TAFE.

The mid-1970s saw several reviews and policies which began to signal evaluation as a key process for consolidating TAFE and as a means of legitimising its accountability and effectiveness. In particular, the South Australian Department of TAFE sponsored a review of schools and colleges which led to a national pilot study to introduce a uniform approach to evaluation of TAFE institutions across the country. Again the approach was based on the premise of increasing accountability and value for money, but couched the presentation in terms of ‘persuasion’ rather than ‘model’ in recognition of staff suspicion of evaluation. There were commonly references to the role of the ‘Evaluator’ and the need for objectivity, impartiality and accountability, and for staff to be separately identified as ‘Evaluators’ (Byrne et al, 1984a; Kuhl, 1978).

In general terms it is instructive to consider Kemmis’ reflections on this era of evaluation in education, as he was not only a participant but a critic. His experience led him to realise that the traditional (1970s) belief that program evaluation is a specialised technological process ... has weakened the obligation and commitment of program participants and decision makers to critical self
reflection, and has created conditions in which specialist evaluators (rather than program participants themselves) now carry primary responsibility for determining the efficacy and effectiveness of programs. The ascention [sic] of evaluation as a specialist professional field ... has been accompanied by a decline in the commitment to developing more powerful forms of self-evaluation. (Kemmis, 1989, pp. 3–4)

The era of the National Evaluation Conferences

The early National Evaluation Conferences

Although there had been other conferences and organisations dealing in part with program evaluation, it was Dr Anona Armstrong’s vision and leadership which brought the disparate groups together in the first of the (initially biennial) National Evaluation Conferences (NEC) in August 1982. At that time the newly elected Cain Labor Government had started to review services, and Dr Armstrong and Professor Alex Wearing were advising the Victorian Department of Community Welfare Services on setting up their social indicators for program planning and evaluation.

The 1982 conference was intended to ‘review the “state of the art” in Australia’ (Armstrong, 1983, p. i). The fourteen speakers presented papers on evaluation applications in health, education, welfare, and manpower planning. A session was also conducted on ‘managing evaluation’, and a panel discussion summarised the key issues in closing. There were 93 participants from all the States of Australia.

Two of the papers provided a historical perspective. Bruen considered the history of health care evaluation in Australia to be:

remarkably similar to the history of Australia’s economic policy. No need for any evaluation in the steady laissez-faire days of Menzies. Indication that all was not well in the troubled time of Holt, Gorton and McMahon, rapid expansion in the heady days of Whitlam, contraction and even recession in the difficult days of Fraser and the razor gang. Throughout this period, evaluation has played an influential, though not always obvious, role in the health decision-making process. Perhaps it is not always easy to point to specific results of individual projects, but the cumulative effect of health services research carried out over the last twenty years has, I believe, been considerable. (Bruen, 1983, p. 49)

However, he identified problems with the kind of health care evaluations conducted so far:

There has, over the last ten years, been some realisation in the health field that not all evaluation is worthless unless it conforms to the rigours of experimental design. Unfortunately there has not always been a willingness to use the most rigorous, and therefore the most informative type of evaluation possible in any specific situation.

We now recognise that formative evaluation (i.e. evaluation of the functioning of, for example, a community health centre) is a needed and useful activity, without the evaluation having to shed light on whether or not community health centres as a whole are a good thing or bad thing for Australia. At the same time, evaluation studies of major health areas (e.g., hospitals, Family M edicine Program, medical research) have often turned out to be nothing more than a collection of opinions expressed by the authors, illustrated with a few selectively chosen facts and figures. Often the time taken by these studies and their cost are more than would be incurred by a more rigorous attempt to evaluate the subject at hand. The Commonwealth, I’m sad to say, is as much at fault as anyone in this regard. (p. 53)

Ralph Straton noted that, notwithstanding the high level of interest in the role of evaluation as a means for achieving efficient and effective services, the level of funding had remained small and was directed substantially toward small local studies, often conducted by practitioners. While expressing optimism about the benefits which could flow from evaluation and the interchange of ideas among practitioners from diverse disciplines, Straton noted that there had so far been a limited sharing of ideas which might contribute to the development of practice.

The 1984 National Evaluation Conference gave opportunities for more comprehensive debate about the direction of the role of evaluation in government policy which had been raised by the Baume Report and by Victoria’s stance on Program Budgeting. Indeed Mune (1986) and others were quite critical of the emphasis in the Baume Report on accountability of programs to the Parliament for efficient use of resources.

The rise of managerialism

Mune’s views seem ironic today, as the now dominant ‘managerialism’ regime had yet to take hold in Baume’s period. It was not until the Reid Report of 1983 promoted management by objectives and performance control, leading to the Financial Management Improvement Program (FM IP) in 1984, that the full course of managerialism was set in train in the Commonwealth. It was this program that fostered an ‘Evaluation Strategy’ in 1988 and mandated annual program evaluation plans and reports for all Commonwealth-funded programs.

In effect, managerialism meant devolving responsibility from the central agencies down towards the service delivery interface, and ‘letting the managers manage’, as well as lifting the importance of program evaluation and internal audit with tighter budgetary accountability, i.e. ‘making the managers manage’ (e.g. Keating, 1989).
In general, Australia seemed to be following a trend of several of the OECD countries. According to the Department of Finance's 1988 FMIP Report, the United Kingdom instituted a similar system in 1982, as did Canada in 1986 and New Zealand in 1989. Of course, the Johnson Administration in the U.S.A. in 1965 promulgated what was probably the original form of Program Budgeting, derived from the Defense Department's Program Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS), which gave rise to their strong emphasis on program evaluation.

These changes were vital ingredients in the making of the National Evaluation Conferences. Some sections of the public sector contributed by strengthening the evaluation capability of the central agencies (e.g. the Commonwealth Public Service Board built an Evaluation Unit of over a dozen staff), and some by developing their own in-house capability. For example, in April 1983 the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) created a position called Research and Evaluation Manager (the first incumbent was the author). But it did not seem appropriate for a small human service organisation to build an empire around evaluation. So I went about developing quality circles and internal capability among the CRS staff for self-evaluation of the programs developed by allied health staff. This led to the creation of a consultancy for Jerome Winston to develop a self-evaluation program using examples from the CRS and an ‘Evaluation Training Kit’ (Sharp, Winston and Bhagwandas, 1986).

The foundation of the AES

The 1986 NEC in Sydney became the turning point with the formation of the Australasian Evaluation Society (see Armstrong, 1987). The Canberra National Evaluation Conference of 1987 saw the more personal side of the debate about the emphasis on appropriateness, access and equity as criteria in the evaluation of public services, versus the advocacy of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. These sides were politically drawn between the Public Service Board, in the person of its Head Dr Peter Wilenski, and the Department of Finance (DoF), under Dr Michael Keating.

It was more than ironic that Dr Wilenski was the invited opening speaker of the Conference, in the final week before the demise of the Public Service Board and his transfer to head the Department of Transport and Communications. This was part of the Hawke Government’s ‘Bastille Day’ restructuring of departments (see Pusey, 1991) which saw the closure of the program evaluation unit of the Public Service Board and the transfer of some of its staff to the Department of Finance. As Dr Wilenski put it (during several ad-libs), formerly ‘evaluation belonged to the Public Service Board’ which pursued management improvement, now ‘we’ve lost the battle to the Department of Finance’ which had taken evaluation over for its purposes of ‘cost cutting’ (Wilenski, 1987).

Government evaluation after the Baume Report

The decade after the release of the Baume report saw a number of studies and reviews of current government evaluation practice which gave widespread coverage to the need to document and review public sector reforms. These included:

- Not Dollars Alone: Review of the Financial Management Improvement Program (Australian Parliament, 1990). This report paved the way for recognising the importance of non-financial performance measurement;
- The Australian Public Service reformed: An evaluation of a decade of management reform (MAB-MIAC 1993). This study reviewed the whole of the Commonwealth Government’s managerialist reform process;
- A Model for Best Practice in Client Service in the Public Sector (Joint Council of Australian Public Service, 1993) put service quality high on the agenda.
- Accountability in the Public Sector (MAB-MIAC 1993) established a uniform model of accountability for the whole of Government;
- Beyond Bean Counting: Effective Financial Management in the APS – 1998 & Beyond (MAB, 1997) consolidated the importance of non-financial data in both monitoring and evaluation of Government programs, and also promoted the use of a Balanced Scorecard.

Resource allocations for evaluation activity varied from delegation, to the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department (e.g. in South Australia), to specific budgetary requirements. According to the 1994 ANAO efficiency audit of evaluation in Commonwealth programs, some Commonwealth Government portfolios spent as much as 2% of their multi-million dollar budgets on evaluation of their programs. Most Governments had delegated the oversight of their evaluation strategy to a particular central agency, e.g. DoF for the Commonwealth; or else, as in most of the States, there were evaluation units established in large departments or agencies, although they may have been called something like ‘Quality Assurance Unit’, as in the NSW Department of School Education.

‘Evaluative Culture’

The ‘lead agency’ role in the Commonwealth in the 1980s led to the imposition of a strong set of espoused values from the top.

The ‘lead agency’ role in the Commonwealth in the 1980s led to the imposition of a strong set of espoused values from the top. For example, the Secretary of DoF asserted (Sedgwick, 1994, p. 20) that the Australian Public Service (APS) was becoming an ‘evaluative culture’, which he described as an ‘attitude, body of technology and incentives’
that led to a questioning by managers and ministers of the effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness of government programs.

However, The Australian Public Service Reformed, while recording a high degree of satisfaction with the general thrust of the progress in management improvement, expressed concern about the so-called 'evaluative culture' that Sedgwick espoused:

The evaluation strategy has been operationalised into a set of procedures that agencies have grown accustomed to, and they are undertaking a great deal of programme evaluation activity. An irony here is that, once again, there may have been a tendency to focus on the procedures, not the results. Everyone is doing evaluation, following the procedures laid down. The success of the process is being measured in process terms... not in terms of program outcomes. ... In sum, the reforms are only half-complete. ... many of the changes already put in place are still taking effect and, even with no further direct initiatives, will lead to further improvements in agency performance in due course. (MAB-MIAC, 1993a, pp. 472–473)

Although this may have detracted from Sedgwick’s organisational diagnosis, it actually gives some credence to the suggestion that Australia (at least in the Commonwealth public sector) had developed some form of whole-of-government evaluation strategy integrated into management improvement.

**International Comparisons**

By 1984, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of America’s Executive arm of government had rescinded its Circular A-117 Management Improvement and the Use of Evaluation in the Executive Branch (Wye, 1992). This was just at the time when in Australia, the Commonwealth and most of the States had begun to establish program evaluation strategies as a tool of management improvement. Within the next ten years, all government agencies (Commonwealth, State and Territory) were basically required to produce evaluation plans and evaluation reports based on regular performance monitoring of programs in the budget cycle, as well as specific evaluations of any major initiatives. This earned Australia a reputation in OECD circles, and especially in the USA, for integrating performance information, with a focus on outcomes of services for clients, into the budgeting and management cycles of government. This perception has been of interest to the American OMB and National Performance Review (NPR), and in shaping their Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, according to one of the senior government advisers, who wrote that:

‘OECO studies reported that Australia was some five to ten years ahead of the United States’ experience of performance measures, and that their centrality to the entire process of reform has greatly accelerated their moves towards achieving a real environment for ‘managing for results.’ ... In testimony before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in May 5, 1992, OMB’s Deputy Director for Management judged Australia to be ‘at the leading edge in performance measurement’ (Breull, 1994, p.4).

However, it is important to recognise that some of what appears innovative was an adaptation by Commonwealth agencies of various approaches from the USA (e.g. linking evaluation to Program Budgeting) and the Australian States, some of which had faded away in response to changes of government. For example, South Australia under the Tonkin Liberal Government was probably the first State to introduce a form of program budgeting in 1982, but it was never fully pursued as a performance management system in the public service, partly due to change of government in 1985, and by 1990 there were significant performance management and program evaluation strategies which superseded the Program budgeting approach.

**Has an evaluation profession emerged in Australia?**

It is not intended here to evaluate the AES or those who call themselves ‘Evaluators’ according to some set of criteria of “profession”. However, it is relevant to mention the early concerns for professionalisation which are to be found in the various communications of the NECs and the AES.

In his keynote address to the National Evaluation Conference in 1989, Martin Quinn Patton, then AEA President, pointed out that the AEA advocated promoting evaluation as a profession. He also suggested that for evaluation to thrive as a profession in this country and worldwide, we needed ‘vision, quality products and processes, and skilled, trained evaluators.’ He also said:

My remarks are meant to be particularly targeted at the members and leadership of the Australasian Evaluation Society because the Society has a special role to play in the future development of the profession. (Patton, 1989, p. 40)

There were some (such as Jerome Winston and I) who took issue with the use of the term ‘Evaluator’ in the Australian context and were concerned about the restrictive or elitist connotations of ‘professionalising’ evaluation. This view was reflected in the 1995 Draft Strategic Plan of the AES and in a resolution from the 1994 Strategic Planning Workshop to the effect that the AES should not be an elitist exclusive guild of professional ‘Big-E’ Evaluators; rather its role should be to encourage those who are interested in the theory, practice and use of evaluation.

In the USA, the spread of program budgeting to all government departments in 1965 under the Administration of President Johnson created an
industry of in-house experts, policy analysts and program evaluators in the public sector. It has been estimated that in about five years there were at least 800 such analysts in 16 domestic agencies (Marvin & Rouse, 1970). But despite the impression that might have been conveyed by the A none Armstrong's publication in 1983 of a Directory of Australian Evaluators, Australia did not at that time have a tradition of professional Evaluators in either the public or the private sector.

The role of the private sector has been difficult to identify as a force in the AES. There have been numerous private consultancies or companies conducting evaluations, but no coherent group of private sector interests (consultants or commerce/industry) or any sense of a distinctive private-sector approach to evaluation in this country. This contrasts markedly with the important (even dominant) role of the private sector providers of evaluation consultancy in the USA. Although, it has been suggested that there is an Australian 'brand' of management consultancy, there is little to indicate a distinctive style in evaluation consultancy.

An example of ambivalence about professionalism is the periodic revival of self-evaluation (by managers and client interface supervisory staff) as a process of making the role of the 'Evaluator' redundant. For instance, in SA the evaluation strategy introduced by the Premier in May 1990, with mandatory reporting of evaluation for 50% of programs over five years, was specifically intended not to create an industry of Evaluators. Indeed, this strategy was supported by a training program designed to give the public sector managers an introduction to conducting their own evaluations.

The aspects of professionalisation on which a consensus is developing in the AES are ethics and standards in evaluation practice, and skills development through adequate training. While most current members will be aware of the developments in both fields over the last few years, it may be of interest to look briefly at their origins in the late 1980s and before.

Ethics and Standards

The first AES Working Group on Ethics and Standards was formed in October 1988 in response to a complaint about an evaluation being conducted by consultants (not members of the AES). Earlier that year Jerome Winston became aware of the complaint and raised the issue with Bryan Lennie, the President at that time. They convened a group comprising Jerome, Professor Stephen Kemmis and me to investigate and consider the AES response on this issue. The Working Group gathered relevant information and made representations individually to the various interested parties, and the issue dissolved without direct AES action, though not necessarily satisfactorily so far as either the complainant or the AES was concerned. Nevertheless, it was decided to take up the broader concern over the role of the AES and to address the need for some kind of code of conduct for evaluation.

With the approval of the AES Committee, Jerome Winston convened a plenary Forum on Ethics and Standards at the National Evaluation Conference in 1989, which I chaired. The Committee on Ethics and Standards in Evaluation was formed to review relevant codes of practice and develop some position papers, which were presented at the National Evaluation Conference 1991 in Adelaide. In July 1992, an Interim Code Of Ethics was circulated to AES members and further developed by Chris M ilne, Ian Trotman and others into the Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations (AES, 1996).

Training and Professional Development in Evaluation

According to the Baume Report, there was some recognition at the time of the need to expose senior public servants to evaluation activity and training by way of a seminar series offered to public servants on an Executive Exchange scheme through the Canberra College of Advanced Education (1978–79). Similar exchanges occasionally involved outside academics: for example, Jerome Winston at Phillip Institute of Technology used such a scheme to work in the Public Service Board and then the DoF in Canberra from July to December 1987 (arriving just at the time when the Public Service Board was being abolished).

By the start of the 90s, some Commonwealth Departments were conducting their own training programs in evaluation methods (e.g. the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service). A number of the States' central agencies ran introductory training programs in evaluation – NSW through the Public Service Board's Program Evaluation Unit, South Australia through the Office of Cabinet and Government Management.

By 1990, when Jerome Winston edited a Directory of Evaluation Training Opportunities in Victoria, there were already at least three graduate diplomas in program evaluation, including offerings at Phillip Institute, Latrobe University and the University of Melbourne. Dr Armstrong's company ET&S also offered a workshop program.

As a recognition of the need for training and development at that time the AES (proposed by President, Dr Caulley) created the positions and subcommittees of a Training & Professional Development Committee, initially co-ordinated by Associate Professor John Owen at The University of Melbourne.

Is there a distinctively Australian Approach to Program Evaluation?

Several authors have examined whether Australia and New Zealand have developed distinct styles of evaluation practice:

- Darrel Caulley (1992), when he was AES President, suggested that there had been five generations of (program) evaluation, and that the fifth generation (derived from action research) was emerging as a distinctive form of
elements of mandatory top-down accountability and formative evaluation, with the integration of accountability and performance improvement into the responsibilities of managers. This mandated evaluation in all Commonwealth-funded programs, requiring annual Portfolio Performance Plans (from 1991), Program Performance Statements, and periodic efficiency audits by the Australian National Audit Office of evaluation practice in the Commonwealth.

A Government-sponsored forum for promoting evaluation theory, research and practice in the guise of the National Evaluation Conferences, subsumed since 1986 by the annual AES conference. This forum has facilitated cross-fertilisation of evaluation practice throughout Australia and New Zealand, and the formation of a diverse practitioner base, while rejecting the opportunity of becoming a guild of professional evaluators.

A commitment since 1988 at the highest levels of Government and the public sector (Commonwealth and most States), and in much of the private sector, to quality improvement and international standards of accreditation on quality management such as ISO 9001.

Agreement through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to promote a common framework for performance indicators and benchmarking for Government Business Enterprises (e.g., gas, electricity, water utilities) and the major human services (e.g., schools, correctional services, health).

A national review to promote quality management, performance improvement and accountability in the third sector.

Conclusions

It is appropriate to end this review with the words of an Australian leader in program evaluation, Professor Stephen Kemmis, summing up the 1986 NEC:

'We have begun to see a collision between views of evaluation as... a process of gathering information for bureaucratic-administrative decision making, on the one hand, and evaluation for a more generally educative purpose, on the other. Some here are interested only in the one view, and some only in the other; some believe that the two can be reconciled in a more liberal eclectic and pragmatic view of evaluation, and some that the two are permanently and essentially in opposition. Those who take the oppositional view see evaluation for bureaucratic-administrative decision making and evaluation for participant education as contrary poles in an opposition between conflicting interests in the modern state...' (Kemmis, 1989, p.2)

Since then, the ‘oppositional view’ seems to have gained the upper hand in the process of governments making program evaluation mandatory, and as a result there is a ‘very general tendency in our evaluation methods and studies towards service to the state alone’ (Kemmis, 1989, p.3).

It is relevant to consider the lessons of the Agricultural Extension era (especially the 1960s) when a program planning model, including...
evaluation, became uniform policy across the States under Commonwealth sponsorship. From this experience the AES might be concerned about:

- the covert culture of evaluation as a self-improvement tool kit for managers in Australia, with fragmentary roots dating before the current 20-year era of program evaluation;

- the experience that like other evaluation models, this one was transitory, and vulnerable to changes in government policy or major structural changes; and

- the political issue of professionalisation of evaluation.

As Sue Funnell (1989, p. 43) pointed out in her review of the 1989 AES Conference, Patton had ‘thrown down the gauntlet to our association with some challenges for the years ahead’. Indeed, Patton left the AES with the challenge of creating a view of evaluation as a ‘profession’, but he did not adequately address all the implications of eliteness and control, and the necessities of ethics and standards. However, in pursuing that vision, members of the AES might be wise to reflect on the past and consider other perspectives than the current regime.

The challenges include the following:

- Can the AES provide a balanced view and a ‘marketplace of ideas’ which fairly serves the various stakeholders?

- Under the economic-rationalist paradigm, and in these days of ‘leaner government’, when ‘we can serve our political and bureaucratic masters by finding out where programs can be cut and savings made’ (Kemmis, 1989, p. 3), can members avoid ‘Shylock’s problem ... the point at which we cannot get the pound of flesh without destroying the program itself’ (Kemmis, 1989, p.3)?

These issues are appropriate for debate in the AES Conferences and in the Evaluation Journal of Australasia, but the Society needs a collection of sources which the debating parties may draw upon for their information. Without an adequate historical perspective these debates will continue to emerge and fade, as individuals come and go and corporate memory fades.

References


Endnotes

1 Chaired by Dr H. C. Coombs, this Commission began during the Whitlam government but was completed under the Fraser government.

2 This committee included probably the two most powerful reformers of health (both were medical practitioners) and welfare of the subsequent decade, Senator Peter Baume (Liberal NSW), and Senator Don Grimes (Labor, Tas.) (cf. Baume, 1977).


4 The Commonwealth and all State Governments in Australia and individual agencies in New Zealand (e.g. the Education Review Office) have sponsored AES and National Evaluation Conferences, most notably by in-kind support with the secondment of staff as conference coordinators. This trend escalated with bigger budgets and more staff resources, peaking in Victoria in 1992. Conversely, when evaluation faded as a priority of the Commonwealth and some States in the late 1990s, this decline was reflected in a cessation or reduction of sponsorships. For example, although the 1991 Adelaide Conference got 1.5 staff and a significant budgetary subsidy, the 1997 Adelaide conference got nothing from the SA Government.

However, the following year in Wellington there was a major sponsorship in money and staffing.
Chronology of key events 1918–1991

1918–1921 Royal Commission to Consider and Report Upon the Public Expenditure of the Commonwealth of Australia

1956 Concepts of Program Planning introduced in Queensland; other States follow from 1957 through to 1965

1969 Commonwealth Committee of Enquiry into Health Insurance (Nimmo Report)

1971 Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) held its first annual national conference with guest speakers from the USA on research and evaluation methods, debating the merits of qualitative vs quantitative methods.

Education Dept at University of Sydney (Dr Ralph Straton) conducted a BA Honours Seminar in evaluation (students included Sue Funnell and Stephen Kemmis). This led to the first regular University courses on program evaluation.

1973 Karmel Report established the Schools Commission

1975 Adam Jamrozik, with colleagues from the Tasmanian CAE, delivers Report on the Evaluation for the State of Tasmania. This is the first state Government to seriously engage in evaluation for the whole of government.

1976 Report of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (the Coombs Report)

1977 Evaluation and Accountability Task Force established by ACOSS, focused on developing program evaluation in the non-profit welfare agencies;

1978 Institute for Social Programme Evaluation established by Dr Ralph Straton at Murdoch University.


First issue of the Australian Evaluation Newsletter (produced by Preston Institute of Technology, July)

1982 Cain Labour Government takes office in Victoria. Institutes the Public Bodies Review Committee and Program Budgeting and gives the Department of Management and Budget the power to review existing programs in the light of the government’s Economic and Social Justice strategies

First National Evaluation Conference, Melbourne

1983 Review of Commonwealth Administration (The Reid Report)

1984 Financial Management Improvement Program Diagnostic Study

Victorian Evaluation Training Network formed by Jerome Winston and others;

1986 3rd National Evaluation Conference. Formation of the AES

1987 Commonwealth portfolio departments required to integrate program evaluation into corporate program management and submit evaluation plans showing systematic evaluations of all programs over a five-year cycle.

1989 Reform of the Australia Audit Office into the Australian National Audit Office as a result of a review by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts;


1991 ANAO Report on Commonwealth evaluation strategy

The 2003 AES Conference\(^1\) was the 21st birthday of conferences held by a group of evaluators who after a few such efforts organised themselves more formally in 1996 to become the AES, which was officially registered in Victoria in 1987. Ours was the third such regional professional society of evaluators, after the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) started in 1981 and the American Evaluation Association (AEA) formed in 1986, as the consolidation of two earlier evaluation associations: the Evaluation Network and the Evaluation Research Society.

This article is not a history of the AES. It lacks the academic rigour and research. It particularly overlooks much of the activity of the regions which are really the heart of the Society. It reflects my experiences, my perceptions, and my analysis over the ten years when I was most actively involved in the Society. Despite these deficiencies or potential biases, I hope it provides an insight into what goes into making a professional society as effective and highly regarded as the AES is, despite having had its share of trials along the way.

**The early 90s**

My first contact with the AES came when I attended the 1990 National Evaluation Conference in Sydney and was impressed by the very efficient organisation and content. A vigorous debate took place on whether the AES should foster training for evaluation or itself undertake evaluation training. A strong consensus focused on internal evaluation, as it was felt that external evaluation led to reports gathering dust with little change, whereas internal evaluation usually had some vested interest in implementation. This session concluded that the AES should collect and supply...
information on tuition courses, experts, resource kits and case studies.

With 350–400 attendees, the conference was well over double the size of its predecessors and set new expectations for the future. As one of the few New Zealanders present, and perhaps from opening my mouth too much, I was pressed by the incoming President Darrel Caulley to join the AES (General or Management) Committee. Not long after the Conference I was persuaded to join the Ethics and Standards Subcommittee to provide a NZ perspective. The Society’s considerable activities in ethics and standards form the subject of a separate article which follows.

At that time there was a very active Queensland region which published regular comprehensive newsletters, had established a video library of case study presentations, and was proposing to encourage student members by offering an essay prize across all Queensland universities. Victoria also had a newsletter, but it was less frequent and more oriented to local meetings. WA had a Program Evaluation Network which met every six weeks with 60–120 (usually the upper end) attendees, although there were only fifteen members of AES in the State. During this period the Canberra Evaluation Forum was being formed by public sector evaluators.

A significant profit from the Sydney conference enabled the President to offer financial assistance to regions to help organise their activities. John Owen was appointed to the new position of Training Coordinator and conducted a survey of regional contacts, which led to the formation of a Training Network and a clearing house.

Darrel Caulley also took responsibility for initiating new developments including establishing an Awards Subcommittee, setting up a Conference Planning Subcommittee, personally putting the membership list on to computer, and producing the first promotional statement of AES Aims and Objectives.

The Adelaide conference in 1991 was fully booked out with 355 participants. The major topic was the future of the AES, which appeared to have reached a crossroads. Up to then it had been primarily a loose network pulled together to arrange an annual conference. The last two of these had become much larger and more sophisticated. Pressures were arising for AES to become more involved in training by oversight of standards for providers, or by direct involvement in delivery. There were indications that if ethics and standards were not addressed by the profession, evaluation was now gaining such political prominence across Australia that government(s) could become involved. There was also debate on whether to encourage members to use letters (MAES) after their names and to provide additional grades of membership like Fellows. This in turn raised issues of accreditation.

At this time there was no formal constitutional provision for regional branches or chapters. This had been done deliberately to allow maximum flexibility. Now the regions believed a formal arrangement was needed, particularly in relation to training activities and to financial needs and management. There were indications some would go their own way. An interim formula was adopted that regions concentrate on providing information to members but make places available for others, using terms such as ‘the encouragement of debate’, ‘sponsored by the Society’ but not ‘promoted by’ or ‘under the auspices of the AES’. There was discussion on what services could help more remote members, and the idea of a newsletter was floated.

After long debate it was decided to set up a Strategic Planning Working Party to look at the future of the AES. The Working Party made great progress over a solid weekend workshop and produced its report prepared by Hans Wijgh in the form, then in vogue, of a corporate plan, AES 2000 – Leading the Society into the Future. It enunciated, for the first time, the role of the AES in a triangular relationship between doers of evaluation (the demand side) and supporters of evaluation (the supply side) where it could fulfill the role of bridge and broker. It also identified a role for the Society in representing the profession and providing information and guidance, e.g. for those thinking about commissioning an evaluation for the first time. The plan indicated a range of possible approaches including from an interest group to a learned society to an exclusive chartered profession. The range of services it provided would depend on which approach was chosen.

The diagram below illustrates the AES’s role as broker & bridge.

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**Diagram:**

- **Demand**: Askers & Doers - Practitioners including consultants & commissioners of evaluations
- **Supply**: Academics & Most Experienced Consultants
- **AES**: Broker & Bridge

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The draft plan somewhat shook the full Committee. Consensus was reached that the AES should be a ‘learned society’ promoting the field of knowledge covered by evaluation and providing services to its members. It should not become exclusive, seeking to provide accreditation and restricted membership. It was decided that the corporate plan and the Committee discussions should be used by a new subcommittee to develop a new constitution.

By 1992 membership had risen to 565, and there were formal regional branches in Queensland and
Victoria with regular meetings in other State capitals and Wellington. Membership was roughly 60% public service and 30% academic and private sector, but concern was expressed at that year's conference that the Evaluation Journal of Australasia was primarily orientated to academics, and doubts were raised about its utility for the majority. The Publications Subcommittee brief was widened to include 'How to do it' booklets and other means of communication such as videos. Around this time the first issue of the newsletter Evaluation News and Comment (EN & C) was produced by the President with some paid help from an associate editor, Ann Neil. It was hoped to publish quarterly.

In September 1992 a crisis emerged. An overdue and previously obstructed audit found that the Treasurer had embezzled $142,000 (including lost interest) and used the funds to purchase farmland in Esperance, Western Australia. Although some cash was repaid after a series of protracted negotiations, the AES instituted civil proceedings to seize the property and declare bankruptcy. The untimely death of the ex-treasurer in April 93 left the Society with interests in a car and poor quality farmland. The Esperance property was finally sold in December 1993 for much less than expected, and after deducting legal and other costs the AES received only $2500.

The amount of additional work brought on by this situation hastened the necessity to employ a part-time Administration Officer. An office was also set up in Darrel Caulley's home rent free and some computer equipment acquired. This provided the first permanent address and phone and fax numbers for the AES. New financial and administrative procedures were established.

Fortunately the Society retained significant liquidity to continue most key activities. But the crisis sent a message that AES must live within its operating income to protect and slowly enhance its reserves. For the first time an annual budget was prepared in the following year as part of tightening up financial management. EN & C was reduced to two editions a year, the part-time support reduced, and subscription fee increased.

The Constitution Subcommittee met over an intensive weekend in Melbourne late in 1992. The existing constitution was a standard model used for associations, clubs and societies in Victoria. It no longer met the needs of the evolving AES where functions were managed by subcommittees or designated positions. It did not cater for an international organisation with members in all Australian States, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and the USA. Some regions had developed semi-autonomous branches and there was a need to clarify powers and financial relationships. It was proving legally deficient. As well as reviewing these reasons for change, the group reviewed the constitutions of the AEA, the CES and several Australian learned societies and drew on the previous year's draft strategic corporate plan.

The group also reviewed and revised the AES aims and objectives (see p20). Key findings of the weekend's discussions were brought together under two headings – Characteristics and Constraints, and Guiding Principles. I have reproduced these in full here, as they have not been published elsewhere, and together they define what the AES had become by ten years ago and where it was going.

The General Committee meeting and AGM at the 1993 conference were among the more far-reaching in AES history. It was decided to reconstitute under recent federal legislation based in ACT which better limited the liability of the management board. There was major debate around changing from a small body focused on networking to a larger organisation providing services to members. There had been concern that the Executive was too powerful and operated too loosely. At the same time the General Committee had grown to around 30 to provide representation and a check on the Executive. There was therefore concern at the recommendation to reduce the size of the management board.

The result of these debates was the AGM supporting a new constitution with a Board of Management made up of the office-bearers (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer), a single representative from each region, and up to five more members appointed by this initial group. The Executive was increased to the four office-bearers plus up to three elected from within the Board. The Executive would meet face to face at least twice a year, including at the AGM, whereas the Board would meet physically only once, with teleconferences to consider major issues and ratify actions of the Executive.

The definition of Australasia was also raised, as formal references suggested it only covered Australia and New Zealand, whereas most thought it extended to Oceania and some thought South-East Asia. This became important because of attendees from the latter attracted to the AES by its broad regional scope.

Queensland was still the largest and most active regional branch. Victoria appeared to have lapsed in activity over the year, but WA had been formally accepted as a regional branch and meetings had been held in NSW, SA, Tasmania and NZ.

Falling interest in the Clearinghouse on Training and comments from the Training in Evaluation SIG led to the formation of a Subcommittee on Training and Professional Development, consisting of Jerome Winston, Brian English and Chris Curteis. This committee has stayed as one of the four major standing committees since then, along with Publications, Ethics & Standards and Awards.

Colin Sharp as President-elect for the next term of 1994–95 presented a discussion paper to the General Committee on a 'Tentative Strategy for the AES for the next Presidency'. The Strategy assured the continuity of function and leadership of the AES and a strategic marketing focus, but provided for a new SWOT analysis. Colin went back to a keynote
address by Michael Quinn Patton to the 1989 NEC suggesting that for evaluation to thrive as a profession it needed a vision, quality products and processes, and skilled and trained evaluators. Colin proposed that the Society:

- develop and implement a new code of ethics and guide on standards for the AES and evaluation practitioners in the region
- take the AES to the Asia-Pacific region by forming an interim SIG on ‘Evaluation in the Asia-Pacific Region’ and requesting the Conference Planning Sub-committee to focus on the larger region in planning, particularly for the 1996 conference to be held in NZ
- publish a 10-year history of AES in 1997.

It was decided to circulate the paper to regions for comment and to hold a special meeting before the General Committee meeting prior to the 1994 conference.

The Canberra Conference in 1994 drew 360 attendees, well below the expected attendance of over 450, possibly due to the high registration fee. This led to discussions to try to set a benchmark at no more than $600. An innovation in the program was a very entertaining and educational hypothetical, following through a Minister’s bright idea without adequate analysis and trying to retrieve it by evaluation as it began to fall apart. Realism

CHARACTERISTICS & CONSTRAINTS

- Insufficient membership in most regions to provide a critical mass which can sustain independent branches capable of implementing the aims and objectives.
- Focus on a regional structure is unlikely to maintain core activities of the journal, newsletter and conference.
- AES does not have the capacity of larger or higher profited organisations which attract additional funding or assistance with resources.
- AES objectives focus activity on the wider evaluation community rather than the provision of exclusive services for members.
- Protection of the name, image, and credibility of the AES is increasingly a vital consideration.
- Activities and structure need to match the reality of resourcing with main funding from subscriptions and conference revenue and with inputs focused on volunteers rather than paid staff.
- Potential benefits of increased funding from corporate membership are likely to be more than offset by reduction in other members as well as increase the administrative costs of servicing them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Management should be by a small group which meets in person two or three times a year (once at the Conference) to improve manageability and efficiency, reduce costs, whilst ensuring representativeness in decision making.
- Management will be by a committee of equals to ensure democratic representation of the regions.
- AES needs to maintain a central capability to further its aim and objectives whilst providing for devolution of authority to sub-groups.
- Sub-groups should have financial support in furthering the AES objectives.
- Sub-groups might be expected to generate additional funds within agreed guidelines.
- Sub-groups will rise and fall with changing needs, including the coordination of core activities.
- Where financial authority is delegated, the minimum requirement is that the sub-group maintain appropriate books which are audited annually and reported to the central body.
- Sub-groups may be geographically, functionally or interest-based.
- The Board of Management should comprise an Executive of four elected office bearers, with defined responsibilities, and elected sub-group representatives.
- The sub-group for representation on the Board at this stage should be based on regional sub-groups with a minimum membership capable of promoting the aim and objectives of the AES - probably a minimum of five to ten members.
- The Board will appoint from within it Board members to liaise with or act as members of standing committees and/or convenors of special interest groups.
- Members’ liability must be limited.
was intense, with a Senate Minister, a leading TV interviewer, a union leader and a range of officials playing their real-life roles.

The special strategic planning workshop led by Colin Sharp, Sue Funnell and Judith Aitken revisited the SWOT analysis. While confirming the role of the AES as a broker between suppliers of evaluation method and techniques on the supply side, and askers and doers on the demand side, the analysis indicated strong threats from the quality movement and pressures to meet ISO standards. A surprising number of members who had previously strongly opposed accreditation now wanted to reconsider this in light of pressures from the quality movement and interest in meeting ISO standards.

The middle years

The two years from 1995 saw a slackening of interest in evaluation among governments in several jurisdictions, which had an impact on the fortunes of AES. The changes meant that numbers at the Sydney Conference in 1995 were lower than expected at only 390. The closure during 1996 of the regional offices of the Commonwealth Department of Finance had a major impact on the AES through the reduction of the support they had provided in such areas as training, assistance with regional mailouts, and supplying speakers.

In January 1995 the Strategic Planning Committee produced a draft plan The AES: Leading Evaluation Theory, Practices and Use into the 21st Century. In March the Training and Professional Development Subcommittee produced an issues paper highlighting:

- identification and monitoring of members' needs
- how AES could best meet these
- the role of the annual conferences in training and development
- activities and workshops to further training and development beyond annual conferences; and
- accreditation - its feasibility, advantages and disadvantages.

In August the subcommittee distributed a comprehensive questionnaire to regions on training undertaken by members over the previous three years, what was needed, and their views on core competencies for evaluation. In its summary of the responses, the subcommittee raised the need to decide on:

- continuing existing AES vehicles - regional networking, Special Interest Groups, conferences & publications
- extending to advise on training and development opportunities
- providing training itself
- becoming a broker; and
- considering accreditation.

First International Evaluation Conference, Vancouver, November 1995

During 1993 it was agreed to respond to an invitation made through Jerome Winston to serve on program and marketing committees for the first international evaluation conference at Vancouver in 1995, provided this did not lock AES into future financial or other commitments. Ralph Straton, who was on a sabbatical in the USA, acted as our initial liaison, and later Jim Stevenson from the Dept. of Finance, seconded to Washington.

The conference was jointly organised by the CES and AEA, who made some effort to involve the AES, the Central American Evaluation Society and, at Colin Sharp’s insistence, the new UK and European Evaluation Societies. Attendance was 1700, including forty from Australia and seven from NZ. There was much debate on the ongoing dichotomies in evaluation - summative vs. formative, qualitative vs. quantitative, internal vs. external, independent situation reporting vs. ongoing improvement - as well as on meta-evaluation and moves from program evaluation to policy evaluation.

It was noticeable that in North America those who departed from the norm and promoted new theory were elevated and treated as celebrities, whereas in the Antipodes the tall poppy syndrome prevailed. Both the CES and the AEA were still debating issues of professionalism and how far to move toward legislative recognition, with views fairly evenly split. I found it surprising that no opportunity was provided for leaders of the then six evaluation societies to consider the utility of periodic joint international conferences.

Early in 1996 the Membership Committee developed a plan which acknowledged the central services but emphasised regional activities like training, access to close expertise and advice, and opportunity to share difficulties and successes, all of which were seen to add value and were not available from other organisations. It proposed regional action plans with 6-monthly reporting, regional liaison with SIGs, publication of a membership brochure, analysis of lapsed members, identification of regional organisations that might be interested, help to members to speak to others through use of a recruitment pack, and the collection of more information about members’ interests to better service their needs.

The Training and Professional Development Committee reported in mid-1996 that it needed more information on members’ experience in use of and needs for training and development. It noted that normal university processes for accrediting courses for evaluation should be appropriate, but AES might wish to seek involvement in assessment panels. It noted variations in regional emphasis on different competencies, and also that regions were catering for many more than just AES members. It pointed out some overlaps with the Publications Review, noting that EJAL as a flagship sought to demonstrate the credibility and enhance the status of the AES but had no particular focus on training, whilst the EN&C ranged widely across readers’ needs and made a significant contribution. It also commented that the
were accurate by requiring applicants to provide it would take reasonable care to make sure claims did not endorse or accredit the services, although who offer services on the condition that that AES suggested the setting up of a database of those courses and consultants on an ad hoc basis. He regional reps in providing information on local paper by Chris Milne on confl icts of interest for links to their sites for a fee. This also related to a website for listing potential suppliers or providing Communication Committee to consider using the deferred until a joint meeting with the Electronic information for a training directory. This was seen as a unique discipline, though borrowing skills and knowledge from others. They acknowledged the debate on whether evaluators need content-specific knowledge, or whether practitioners with generic evaluation skills can produce successful evaluations with limited content-specific knowledge, favouring the latter view. They assumed that evaluators must be responsive to client needs and sensitive in multicultural societies to issues like ethnicity, race, gender, age, social class, and disability. Their model included generic competencies such as research skills, organisational/management theory, project management skills, ethical behaviour, communication skills and change skills, along with specific competencies such as understanding what evaluation is and its role, understanding debates surrounding evaluation and their implications for practice, ability to make judgements based on information collected, and ability to ensure maximum utilisation of evaluation findings. The final two skill sets they identified were synthesis skills to combine the other competencies, and intuition.

The Board meeting at the 1996 conference endorsed a plan by the Training and Development Committee to

- identify training and development opportunities in universities
- liaise with trainers to make specific modules/courses and develop promotional strategies; and
- continue work on competencies.

Later the Committee proposed to employ two contract research assistants to help collect information for a training directory. This was deferred until a joint meeting with the Electronic Communication Committee to consider using the website for listing potential suppliers or providing links to their sites for a fee. This also related to a paper by Chris Milne on confl icts of interest for regional reps in providing information on local courses and consultants on an ad hoc basis. He suggested the setting up of a database of those who offer services on the condition that that AES did not endorse or accredit the services, although it would take reasonable care to make sure claims were accurate by requiring applicants to provide two referees to confirm the information for AES use only. Regional committees would be asked to vet the information and if necessary negotiate agreed statements of experience. The aim in bringing together this material was to avoid any AES administration burden or being arbiters of quality.

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Special Interest Groups

These were introduced, I think, by Darrel Caulley, after the model of the AEA's TIGs (topical interest groups), which in my opinion are one of its greatest strengths in the way it has developed and used them. To some extent they provide the AEA with a cabinet system for communication and governance, nurturing and mentoring. On reflection, I believe that Darrel actively encouraged SIGs during the crisis of 1992 to help hold the organisation together informally. After he left the presidency he continued as SIG co-ordinator until this role was taken over by Judith Aitken as vice-president.

From 1995 to 1997, as evaluation ceased to be mandated by the Australian States and the Federal government's interest waned, it became difficult to provide leadership and maintain a critical mass to provide a range of inputs and outputs. In its heyday the annual conferences were actively encouraged to provide times for SIG meetings and the co-ordinators actively tried to identify and encourage group leaders.

In 1990–91 SIGs covered education evaluation, health evaluation, microcomputers in evaluation, evaluation of trainers and staff developers, and evaluation and program management. Over the next 5–6 years they expanded to include qualitative methodology, quantitative methodology, cross-cultural evaluation, teaching evaluation, and economics in evaluation.

SIGs still exist, but they do not appear to be recorded in annual reports nor to be as actively encouraged. Certainly the constitution was written envisaging their playing a major role. Perhaps we just need a few enthusiastic potential SIG leaders to bring about more of the benefits associated with the AEA TIGs or a certificate of accomplishment. This was seen as a pilot regional development project testing the logistics for refresher training. The pilot was based around the AES-derived competencies and included four parts:

- familiarisation with selected readings
- a block course on evaluation theory
- a block course on practice and methodologies; and
- a written paper for assessment.

The course was to be delivered at three locations over two weekends and the intervening week, with up to 30 places. Training was to be provided by Australian academics, preferably linked to NZ trainers to facilitate cultural match. Candidates were expected to range from proficient to approaching expert, i.e. no novices. The Board agreed to call for proposals and costings, subject to fees being set on the basis of break-even for members and a surcharge for non-members to provide a buffer.

Also during 1996, the Board agreed to explore additional membership benefits such as reduced costs for presentation training by Toastmasters, and reduced banking and phone charges. These suggestions came out of concerns over falling membership in the ACT
and Queensland, mainly as a result of government policy and structural changes.

**The later years**

The Adelaide Conference in 1997 had a strong focus on the third (i.e. community) sector. I also remember it for a record attendance of 49 participants from NZ out of a total of 280, including a smattering from Europe, the USA and Canada who had been attracted from the website.

At that time evaluation was in a state of flux around the world. On the one hand some countries were dropping formal mandates, and on the other there was a realisation that only through evaluation could the success of major programs be judged. In some places more effort was being made to link budget processes, formal audits and evaluations. A number of countries were using sunset clauses in legislation or corporate/strategic plans to ensure progress (formative) and formal summative evaluation. There were particular concerns in managing health with its growing size and complexities.

As incoming President, Sue Funnell followed what had become a tradition of presenting her strategic directions for the coming year. From reviewing activities and accomplishments she identified four issues and challenges:

- to ensure projects fulfilled their potential
- maintenance of core services
- a shared understanding of the fundamental features of evaluation
- AES functioned efficiently as an organisation.

She proposed a more disciplined project management approach, with clear objectives and a timetable, and with one person in each project especially focused on the regional perspective and implementation at that level. She noted that significant developments had been made in the new area of electronic communications, whilst struggling with some core services – conference attendance had started to drop and there were now commercially driven competitive evaluation conferences. The Journal was struggling, and so were some regions, with Tasmania in recess.

She proposed more of a joint-venture approach with academic institutions for the Journal, possibly a larger single issue each year rather than struggling with two. She advocated more support and personal intervention by the Executive for flagging regions. Professional pressures were increasing with requests for information about evaluators and comment about professional issues such as standards. There was some overlap among professional societies and competition for members. AES needed a clearer view of good and bad practice and competencies. We were not alone, as the CES and AEA were grappling with the same issues.

Sue also urged that better use be made of the experience of past Board members and strategic alliances considered with some allied professions, e.g. internal auditors. New approaches such as advertising, sponsorship and cost recovery could all have a profound influence on the future. She advocated three standing committees – Awards and Standards, Professional Training and Development, and Publications – with other matters to be dealt with by project taskforces.

The Northern Territory was approved as a new region with 30 members after active support by the Auditor-General and the Public Service Commissioner. Later in the year approval was given for a South Island NZ region based on Christchurch, with a core of 10–15 members.

The Adelaide conference wound up with an unexpected profit of over $78,000. The SA region prepared a business case to use part of the profit to develop a manual and workshop for community sector and Aboriginal sector evaluation. Later it was intended to try to make this proposal a joint venture with research, industrial research and training interests, but it never quite came to fruition.

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A rising from her initial strategic directions paper, and as a precursor to developing the initial draft Sponsorship and Advertising policy, Sue Funnell early in her term prepared an insightful and far-reaching paper on Values and Principles for Board Decision Making. At one stage it was suggested that it be published with the Constitution, but after being worked over with much debate and going through a few iterations it became an underpinning document to the Compendium of Board Policies. In order demonstrate the thought and range of considerations that Boards must consider, I have summarised these as follows:

**Values and guiding principles**

- Overarching commitment to service members, making every effort to ensure
  - Service to members takes priority
  - Exchange of information is maximised
  - Privacy is respected
  - Links among members and others with evaluation interests are fostered
  - Collegiality is fostered – AES to be inclusive rather than exclusive or hierarchical & mutually supportive instead of having a competitive orientation
- Equitable treatment of members and respect for differences
- Affordability – core services are to be affordable to all members
- Value for members’ subscription is maximised
■ Cost-recovery for services not available to all members and/or available to non-members, but benefits to members and AES corporate values take precedence over revenue-raising

Publications continued to be a problem, with no issues of the EJA in 1997 and complaints from library subscribers. It was decided to produce a bumper issue in 1998 and give the libraries a refund, and then to review the position. A teleconference involving John Wilson, Colin Sharp, Brian English and Darrel Cauley reiterated the journal’s importance for academic publication, and decided that no conference papers should be published as presented without further polishing and the Publications Committee would have to chase articles. Two other professional organisations to which I belong were also having problems around this time, which in one case led to a combination of its journal and magazine, ensuring a distinction for refereed articles.

Professional Training and Development was advanced by the NZ Pilot Training Project summer school held in winter for 50 students (plus a short waiting list) in two courses at Wellington by John Owen and Ros Hurworth from the Centre for Program Evaluation at Melbourne University. About 60% were AES members and 40% non-members who paid $NZ 1600–1850. Students were given access to the University library and website for a semester. It turned out to be very successful and thoughts were given to repeating it in Darwin and Townsville. It also flushed out some issues around intellectual property and how long the rights of the presenters should last.

Work on the competencies was reviewed and placed into a more general UK professional competency model. Other countries’ work in the same area was also considered. There were still difficulties associated with defining evaluation and the levels of competencies required by those playing different roles in evaluation – commissioning, managing, evaluating, researching and training.

Arising from the 1996 Vancouver International Conference, an informal forum of evaluation societies had developed. This led to proposals for a meeting of the Panel of Presidents in Chicago in November 1998. The Board supported AES involvement and considered the implications of various possibilities, including a new international evaluation organisation, an international association in which the current regional societies would become chapters, and a federation of the existing seven societies. Sue also conducted the negotiations which led to a formal agreement that members of AES & CES could have status as Associate Subscribers (members) of the other organisations at discounted rates, without voting rights and without access to awards.

The Melbourne Conference in 1998 was held in the luxurious downtown Hotel Sofitel. Despite a Statewide gas strike and a general election, 350 attended, presenting over 100 papers. I noted at the time that the quality of the fourteen pre-conference workshops and the provision of focused sessions on professional topics were now providing more scope for professional development. In a session on ethics it was great to have managers very openly expose critical issues which had faced them, the options they considered and why particular courses of action were taken. There was very high audience participation and clear appreciation of the opportunity to discuss such real issues.

The theme of Evaluation: Investing in the Future, and sub-themes around change, together with key speakers and participants from North America, UK, and Asian countries, highlighted some interesting international trends:

■ a tension between ‘heroic evaluators’ focusing on social science research and ‘renaissance evaluators’ who see an expanding role across a wider range of activities and multi-disciplinary approaches
■ increasing recognition of having evaluators involved in policy design so that the effectiveness and efficiency of applications are capable of being monitored and evaluated
■ increasing complexity of issues involving multi-agency programs and partnerships between different levels of government, the voluntary sector and the private sector
■ difficulties from evaluation dealing with values and judgements of worth while increasingly interfacing with politics
■ more demand in the northern hemisphere for evaluation by the legislature as opposed to the executive
■ the use in Japan of part-time voluntary counselors who evaluate complaints against all levels of government.

There was an apparent move in Australia towards more selective evaluation as government restructuring had cut down internal evaluation units, with a number of more experienced practitioners becoming consultants.

Professional development and competencies had become caught up in the ongoing debate on accreditation and certification, but the Committee had decided to steer clear and concentrate on training needs. They had identified only a few Australian approaches and the competency framework the earlier committee had developed for the NZ Pilot Project. Other countries were also working in the area. The most useful was the UK, where the National Vocational Qualifications under development included a module on evaluation. As part of this process, Cheetham and Chivers in a paper Towards a holistic model of professional competence had identified four components:

■ Functional competencies – tasks, skills
■ Personal/Behavioural competencies – attributes
■ Knowledge/Cognitive competencies – knowledge and application
■ Values/Ethical competencies
The Committee drew all this material into a framework for circulation and comment. On the international front, Sue developed a draft position paper, adopted by the Board, supporting strategic alliances and international partnership rather than an overarching international organisation. The paper argued that value would be added by emphasising learning through diversity and seeking political support by avoiding any monopoly domination or single paradigm. It further advocated three broad approaches – build evaluation capacity by brokering information and synthesising evaluation results, contribute to knowledge about world issues, and enhance evaluation organisations. At a meeting convened by the AEA International and Cross Cultural Topical Interest Group, attended by four new associations – Kenya, Malaysia, Italy and Germany – the AES position was seen to be more advanced than most of the ten participants. A further meeting was planned for Italy in 1999 if foundation sponsorship could be organised to develop the concept. (An international umbrella group, the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation, has since been formed with the AES President, Penny Hawkins, as a member of the Board.)

Concerns about financial losses at the Melbourne conference (fortunately a rare occurrence) led to a review of corporate governance by Treasurer Barry Shaw and Kate Stanton. It became obvious as a result of the financial problems with the Melbourne conference just how dependent the AES was on the revenue from conferences to pay for the ongoing running of the organisation. It also became apparent that despite its dependence on this revenue, the Board had minimal control over the conference budget and expenditure once it had approved the initial proposal. It also led to realisation that AES was living above its means and a more in-depth strategic review was required.

The review of corporate governance focused on the role of the Board, committees and management by the Executive and administration. It had a preliminary look at risk management and identified that the Executive might need more clearly delegated authority. It recommended establishing an Audit Committee and exploring reconstitution under federal corporations law and review of the election process. These recommendations were accepted, with Barry and Kate being appointed the Audit Committee together with an outsider to be added.

Over the Christmas-New Year break 1998–99, Sue and I with help from Anthea Rutter and Eve Barboza prepared a major review paper covering AES origins, achievements, nature of membership, fee structure, nature of current and emerging services, benefits and likely appeal to segments of members, modus operandi of the Board, prime sources of income and expenditure, and options for increasing revenue and reducing expenditure.

We found that membership had risen fourfold from 135 in 87–88 to 565 in 91–92, reached a plateau until 96–97 and then increased by 100 in 98–99. Fifty-three percent of members were now drawn from the public sector, 16% from consultancy firms (many of them small), and 14% from higher education. Revenue was primarily from subscriptions, held constant since 1994, and from conference surpluses. Major development had occurred in electronic communications over the previous four years, largely through the generous sponsorship of ITS (International Technological Services) and IMM (Institute of Municipal Management), and was emerging as both a major research tool and a significant cost. With more regions and standing committees, Board meetings had become unwieldy with longer and more frequent meetings to get through the business. We also discovered that the move to centralise finances in order to meet audit requirements had reduced revenue by 20–30% by reducing regional inputs which had not formally gone through the main books.

The paper raised a number of options and was aimed at seeking the views and priorities of members. The Board agreed to undertake structured interviews of a stratified sample of members. Only four regions completed the task, and the results of the 28 interviews were often split. They did reveal support for sponsorship and corporate membership, fewer Board teleconferences and continuation of the magazine, though views on the Journal were split. The membership directory was used, but less for finding consultants than expected, possibly because those who were local were already known.

Ethics was seen as an important and core function of a professional organisation's credibility and image. Work on competencies had high support with comments that accreditation should focus on courses rather than people. Awards were also supported for their professional image, with suggestions that sponsors be sought. Surprisingly little support emerged for overseas initiatives.

The Executive decided to recommend that the Board meet only the minimum of three times annually required by the Constitution, with the Executive increased to a maximum of eight by adding a representative from standing committee chairs plus representatives from Australian and New Zealand regions, and meeting as required to progress the business. Normal membership was raised to $105 with provision for fees to be reviewed annually against the CPI, and provision was made for student members. It was also decided to amend the Constitution to enable the Board to set fees and report them to the following AGM.

There were some strong reactions to the Executive's decision to cease publishing the Journal, and it was decided to defer this for the new Board to explore possibilities which included an electronic journal, combining with other evaluation journals, and picking up an offer by Colin Sharp to be editor. Subsequently it was decided to combine with the magazine but to include a section of refereed papers.
This was similar to the approach taken by some other smaller professional bodies.

The Perth Conference in 1999 exceeded expectations, for a location away from the eastern seaboard, with an attendance of around 230 and made a substantial surplus. Interest in the workshops was particularly high, with over 300 attending. This conference marked the end of Sue Funnell’s term as President, and I was asked by several to stand. But after ten years at the centre I was feeling drained, with all my innovative ideas and efforts having already been contributed, especially over the previous two years as vice-president. I could also foresee difficulties in the role without the support of an organisation in the background, which my retirement after 41 years in the workforce precluded. It was time to pass over to new blood.

**Commentary**

What does it actually take to provide a professional society? After reflecting on more than ten years of involvement in the AES in both regional and central positions, there are some points which clearly emerge:

- **Vision** – The Society would not exist nor have accomplished its many achievements without the vision of a number of people. All the Presidents I have served with have had vision, although it has varied from broad and far-reaching to narrower but intense in focus.

- **Leadership** – particularly the ability to embrace a vision, whether self-originated or evolved with others, and to communicate it to others so that they embrace it and together strive to implement it. We have been fortunate that most Boards have had at least two or three members with this ability. Similarly, most regions usually manage one or two for the local committee, but there are examples where their absence has led regions to go into recess until another emerges.

- **Critical mass** – Although much was achieved in the early days when AES was small, the range of professional services we now expect could not really have been contemplated until membership exceeded 300–400. For this reason I personally believe NZ is better to stay as part of a regional society than go on its own. It also brings much more experience and networking to bear, particularly, for sub-sectoral special interest groups. We have a long way to go to catch up with the utility that the AEA and CES get from their equivalents.

- **Recognition of professional expectations** – Practitioners expect at least some form of newsletter or learned journal, and usually some form of professional development or maintenance. The public expect professionals to keep up to date, as well as operate to a code of ethics and disciplinary procedures. At the same time, these expectations must be realistic, as it is impossible to do everything at once and overreaching can create problems.

- **Good communications** – up and down within the organisation; in and out of it, and within or around the regions and the corporate management. Maintaining good communications, at low cost, is a critical component in a federation of regions.

- **Good organisational dynamics** which balance good representation with efficiency, innovation with solid experience, and the needs of individuals, the regions, firms, the public and the collective professional interest.

- Adequate records and clearly recorded policies – This should ensure consistency over time and location, facilitate quick responses, and reduce re-litigation and reinventing the wheel. The AES Compendium of Board Policies was the envy of some of the other evaluation societies.

- (especially) Dedicated people - Without such people willing to give of themselves little would be accomplished, particularly for key positions of responsibility. Ideally they would bring a range of skills and experience and an ability to see different sides of an issue, recognise the importance of identifying and debating options, and most important, be willing to work hard for the common good.

**Acknowledgements**

The State Services Commissioner of New Zealand allowed me access to the Commission’s extensive records. Special appreciation is due to Maria Crequer and Lois Sinclair who currently have responsibility for records management, with Lois spending much time and physical effort to locate and gather many files together for my use. Sue Funnell, Colin Sharp and Anthea Rutter kindly commented on the draft of the original paper from which this article was drawn, correcting and filling gaps of information. Doug Fraser has done an excellent job in editing this and the associated article down from a paper three times as long and drawing out the essence for a more general audience, whilst the full version should be of interest to potential board members and researchers of organisational dynamics.

**Note**

1. This article is an abridged version of a paper prepared for the Auckland 2003 conference committee and used to prepare a summary chronology of the AES and summaries on the evolution of major services and elements of management in a poster display (available on the AES website 2003 conference papers at: http://www.aes.asn.au). It also excludes the significant dimension of the AES activity with ethics and standards which have been extracted into a companion paper Ethics and Standards – twelve years of mixed progress.
In my first year as a member, 1990-91, the AES Ethics and Standards Subcommittee considered a paper on Standards in Evaluation by Christine Martins which described the work of the Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation led by Daniel Stufflebeam, and advocated more active exploration of the topic in the Evaluation Journal of Australasia and national evaluation conferences).

As a result of experience a few years previously in researching and developing a code of ethics for the NZ public service, I felt the approach being taken by the Subcommittee was too philosophical and academic to lead quickly to practical guidelines for practising evaluators. I therefore suggested consideration of formats ranging from a simple ‘Ten Commandments’ on a card, through an expanded but pithy version suitable for carrying in a wallet or purse, to a more discursive booklet with or without examples, and recommended a two-stage approach, starting simply and advancing to the more comprehensive.

For the 1991 Adelaide conference, Colin Sharp as the new Chair of the Subcommittee prepared a comprehensive paper. Colin recommended in summary that:

- AES adopt the Joint Committee Standards with some caveats;
- these be used by commissioners of evaluations and practitioners for guidance;
- AES pursue the use of draft guidelines and case studies, including overseas examples, to illustrate excellence and pitfalls;
- AES advise practitioners and users if in doubt to seek advice of other professionals to determine action which would cause least harm to those most at risk;
- AES appoint a list of experts to represent and interpret codes of ethics and standards in evaluation; and
- AES promote research to verify the appropriateness of standards and demonstrate exemplars of quality evaluation practice.
Colin’s paper led to healthy debate during the conference and at the AGM. The Subcommittee was enlarged so it could make more progress with recommendations for the next AGM. It also became clear that progress would have to involve wider consultation with allied groups and clients.

The rejuvenated Subcommittee aimed to produce four products before the 1992 conference: a statement of legal requirements and implications (the responsibility of Darrel Caulley); a draft code of ethics (Ian Trotman); a set of standards for evaluation practice in Australasia (Jerome Winston); and a PR pamphlet or discussion paper (Colin Sharp). It was fortunate that in Wellington two organisations were looking at codes for their own evaluation work, so I was able to draw on their work and form a working party with Marilyn Levine (Dept. of Social Welfare) and Jeanette Schollum (Education Review Office). This group reviewed the previous work, examined additional codes until around forty had been sighted, and went through a process of consultation on a number of drafts. Michael Small of WA, one of the Subcommittee, was on a sabbatical at Massey University and we were able to keep in touch easily, finally meeting in Palmerston North for revision and signoff from the working party.

An example was also prepared in a small folding format for purse or wallet. It included a preface on the code’s purpose and information on the AES. This was finished for a late February teleconference where a few changes were made and some different formats tried. The draft Interim Code of Ethics was then circulated to participants from the previous conference and to regions, for comment before the 1992 conference in July.

Reactions from members ranged from support to questions about the timeliness and appropriateness of such an initiative for AES, given its decision to define itself as an interest group rather than attempting to push for an elite and controlled profession. The Queensland region reported on a forum of 40 participants in a two-page statement, commending progress over the last decade but questioning the potential of AES producing a commentary on ethical issues, and the impacts of collecting case studies on ethical issues.

At the international evaluation conference in Vancouver in 1995, a pre-conference workshop on the Joint Committee’s 1994 revision of the Program Evaluation Standards was presented by its Chairman, Dr James Sanders. Colin Sharp and I, with Neville Highett for part of the time, had a meeting with Dr Sanders to discuss the possible internationalisation of the Standards and their possible redevelopment to fit the then new ISO approach. Although interested, the Joint Committee was weary after its work in revising the Standards to apply more generally than their initial and still primary focus on education. It was also very concerned at the practicality of spanning different cultures. Dr Sanders was interested in the potential of AES producing a commentary or companion volume for our needs. He was also interested in detailed comments which would be collected for further revisions, possibly at about five-yearly intervals.

Meanwhile, at the 1995 AES conference, it was decided that efforts should be made to review the Interim Code of Ethics so that it could be finalised, and that more work be done on how to handle standards, using a weekend workshop. (In the event, it was not possible to organise this during the year.) Discussion raised once more the issues of whether the Code was primarily a regulatory device or a set of advisory guidelines.

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there was a common core of values, and proposed that a set of standards or a statement of ‘Best Practices’ be developed to guide practice. It argued that a code, if developed, should reflect behaviours rather than procedures and expressed concerns at the legal ramifications, particularly in respect of expert witnesses in a court of law.

In spite of these concerns, the draft code of ethics was adopted in 1992, with a few changes, as an Interim Code of Ethics for trial and comment over the next two years. It was confirmed that the AES would continue to advocate the American Joint Committee Standards, which were currently being revised, and it was noted the AEA was also working on ethical standards. It was felt it might be best to adopt one of these codes and provide a commentary on its application to Australasian conditions.

The draft Interim Code of Ethics was formally adopted by the 1993 AGM. There was disappointment that the Joint Committee Standards revision had concentrated on educational use instead of being more generalised as expected. It was felt that the AES might have to produce something itself, given the level of interest and the number of requests for such information.

Little progress was made during 1993-94 whilst waiting for information from the AEA. It was noted their approach was framed for external evaluation, whereas much of ours was internal. Eventually it was agreed to move on without waiting.

In 1995, the Committee on Ethics and Standards in Evaluation recommended review of the Interim Code of Ethics in light of the published revision of the Joint Committee Standards; powers for disciplining members under the Constitution if they persistently and wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Society and its code of ethics; and the impacts of collecting case studies.

Discussion raised once more the issues of whether the Code was primarily a regulatory device or a set of advisory guidelines.
The Ethics and Standards Committee was directed to try and progress from the Interim Code of Ethics by producing Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, desirably with illustrative case studies. The American Program Evaluation Standards in their revised 1994 guise were formally recognised as being appropriate for use by AES members.

In December 1996 the Committee on Ethics and Standards in Evaluation held a weekend retreat in Melbourne to address the need of advancing the Interim Code of Ethics by something shorter and tighter, which if possible linked to standards and included examples. This intense weekend, under the chair of Ros Volpato and assisted by a contracted researcher, made excellent progress in developing a 24-step Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations with each step illustrated by a very brief pithy illustrative example. It was seen as complementary to the Joint Committee Standards, and covered both principles and procedures.

By 1997–98, the Committee had become an Ethics Taskforce, and had an extremely busy year now under the leadership of Chris Milne. At the start it published the Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, excluding the illustrative examples, in the AES corporate format and distributed copies centrally to the federal Australian and New Zealand governments, drawing a number of positive comments. It was left for regions to distribute copies to state and local governments. A regular feature on ethical examples was initiated in EN & C. Later a weekend workshop in Sydney tackled a review of the Interim Code of Ethics by looking again at specifications and preparing a comparative table of expected professional behaviour, statements from the Interim Code and Guidelines, and the new values and guidelines statement for Board decisions. It concluded that the Society would need to consider the implications of sanctions for behaviour which seriously offended expectations, and that acceptance of and adherence to a code must be a condition of membership. This led to a revised draft Code of Ethics in a much simpler style than before and a draft policy on its implementation. A disciplinary process involving a special investigative group, including an independent member from a related professional organisation, was proposed. The Board approved the package for circulation and comment prior to its Melbourne meeting. Late in 2000, Chris Milne finalised and gained endorsement for the revised Code of Ethics, which was published, and for the associated policy on its operation.

A meeting of AES members at the Geelong conference in 2000 led to re-activation of work on Standards over 2000-01 by a small committee led by Doug Fraser. This work built on a paper prepared by him and Jerome Winston with help from Patricia Rogers, who presented it at the Perth Conference in 1999. This paper had developed a series of standards for application in Australasia, and took the approach of following through the stages of managing an evaluation. It is a very good paper and hopefully will be available on the AES website.

Over a period of about eighteen months this group spent time discussing and debating whether such an approach was the best to use, or whether the structure of the document should be based on a series of principles or underpinning concepts such as the four used in the Joint Committee Standards and, if the latter, what should they be.

Unfortunately, because of the work commitments of most of the committee members, activity was rather spasmodic. I think the majority believed some linkage to the American Program Evaluation Standards would be useful and some underpinning principles would provide a firm foundation. But none emerged which gained quick or strong support, and there was some concern that the simplicity and practicality of the Perth paper was in danger of being lost. The work was pulled together for a workshop at the Canberra Conference in 2001 in a matrix which compared the Perth suggestions against the American Program Evaluation Standard main concepts, which were slightly modified to better suit the use of language in this part of the world, and also to show linkages with the Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.

The workshop was unable to give a clear guidance on preferences, or on the alternatives of whether a local version of the standards or some form of commentary to be used with the American Program Evaluation Standard should be developed. Heavy demands from a new job and his important work in editing the new Journal meant Doug had to give up as convenor and nobody else at present has volunteered to re-activate the project.

A complementary initiative to develop a set of competencies for evaluators in Australasia has been undertaken, initially led by Sue Funnell and then picked by Brian English as chair of the Professional Development and Training Committee, but this is a topic for a separate paper. Meanwhile the Perth paper is a useful guide for evaluators from the Antipodes, although it carries no AES endorsement.

Note this is a companion paper to Trotman’s Reflections on a decade in the life of the Australasian Evaluation Society - 1990-1999 which excludes information on ethics and standards.

Footnote
1 Standards for Evaluations of Educational Programs, Projects and Materials, Stufflebeam (Ed), Sage 1981
The 21st AES Annual International Conference was held at the Waipuna Hotel in Auckland in mid-September 2003. The themes of the conference were:

**Evaluation: who benefits? What is it really for? What does it actually take? What is the use?**

There were also strong indigenous and Pacific themes throughout all the conference events.

**The workshops**

An extensive workshop program was delivered. Altogether over 300 places were booked in the 16 sessions offered. The informal feedback from those attending was that they were very worthwhile and participants had been stimulated and enthusiastic. I thoroughly enjoyed the one I went to.

**The conference**

The conference attracted over 250 delegates and a handful of one-day delegates. They came from many countries including the US, Italy, Samoa, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Due to excellent sponsorship, we were able to offer student/unwaged/concession rates to a number of delegates.

Indigenous and Pacific delegates were offered ‘scholarships’ using other specifically-tagged sponsorship money. Although money was set aside for five people, it was able to be stretched to allow more than this to come with all their needs met.

We had eight superb keynote speakers coming from five different countries, including indigenous speakers from both Aotearoa and Australia, presenting diverse views about their particular evaluation interests. All gave thought-provoking addresses.

During the conference, over 70 people presented papers, panels and discussion groups on a range of topics around the conference themes. In addition to the formal program, we left some spaces empty so that informal discussions and debates could take place as the ideas were stimulated. This proved to be very successful and people used the opportunities for debate and discussion. A list of the papers and presentations is now available on the AES website www.aes.asn.au, many with full text copies, and a number have been submitted for publication as referred papers in the EJA. Several of them, including two keynote addresses, are in this issue with more to follow in subsequent issues.

What is less easy to describe is the wonderfully relaxed and friendly atmosphere around the event. Wherever I went, I heard the happy voices of people enjoying the networking opportunities and catching up with old friends. Feedback from delegates, keynotes speakers, presenters and organisers has been very positive indeed and the conference has been an unqualified success.

As the convenor, it was such a pleasure to organise this great event. I would like to thank our many sponsors for their help and the organising committee for their hard work with unfailing cheerfulness.

Maggie Jakob-Hoff was convenor of the 2003 conference committee.
**Indigenous Evaluation Wananga**

**Waipapa Marae, 13-14 September**

*Tania Wolfgramm, Pam Oliver and Shaun Akroyd*

As part of the Conference, an Indigenous Evaluation Wananga was held over two days at Waipapa Marae. The purpose was to discuss developments, issues and other themes relevant to evaluation with indigenous peoples, and the wananga was open to people of all cultures.

More than 40 delegates attended, including representatives from a broad range of ‘stakeholder’ groupings – evaluation practitioners, students, representatives of Crown agencies and community agencies, and providers of social services. Cultures represented included Maori, Australian Aboriginal nations, New Zealand Pakeha, United States American, Scottish and Jewish.

Presentation topics included the role which evaluation has in improving the quality of education for Maori in New Zealand schools, building community capability in evaluation, ways to address stakeholder divergence in evaluation goals, and issues in the development of a kaupapa Maori evaluation framework.

However, the feedback from many delegates was that the particular value of the wananga was in its process, which followed usual hui protocol and thus provided time for issues to be discussed in detail. The diversity of presentation styles allowed participants plenty of opportunity to express their opinions in a safe, inclusive and open-minded context. New connections amongst people present were established and old ones rejuvenated, as people participated actively in workshops and open forums, as well as the social aspects of the wananga. People who had not ever attended a conference before, and those who were relative newcomers to evaluation, commented that this was a perfect introduction in terms of feeling confident to participate, express their views and ask questions.

For example, one young mother said that she had made sacrifices by leaving her young ones and baby at home, which was difficult for her, but that she felt that the learning she gained from the wananga was well worth it. A service provider commented that he was very grateful for the help and insight given him through the wananga and is now very enthusiastic to start developing and shaping an evaluation for his own services (with the assistance of experienced evaluators).

The Australian Aboriginal participants were included in all aspects of the wananga and were pleased to be able to share many of their experiences. Furthermore, they said they felt very welcome and comfortable, and all involved in the wananga were very friendly towards them. They especially liked the waiata – and joined as often as they could!!!

Rick Cummings, AES Vice-President, commented that he was very grateful for the experience of being included in a wananga, the whanaungatanga process, the way of learning in the whare nui, and the way the wananga set the scene and the feeling of closer connectedness for the rest of the conference. In his keynote address, summing up the conference, he showed many photos which he had taken at the wananga.

Tania Wolfgramm, Shaun Ackroyd and Pam Oliver were members of the 2003 conference committee.

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**Fono Pasifika**

*Melani Ane*

The Fono Pasifika, coordinated by myself and Tanya Wolfgramm, was well attended, with over 40 participants from a wide range of backgrounds, including Pacific scholars and researchers from our universities and other tertiary institutions, Colleges of Education, and private research consultancies. They also included several of our palagi colleagues from NZ and Australia. The high esteem with which this fono was viewed was evidenced by generous sponsorship from the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Pacific Business Trust and the calibre of people who attended – the cream of our Pacific researchers.

The keynote speaker, Elaine Lameta, and other invited speakers including Anna Pasikale from the Tertiary Education Commission, Jim Mather and Pauline Winter of the Pacific Business Trust, Shane To’oala, Marcus Lloyd and Meaola Toloa from the Auckland College of Education, Karlo Mila from the Health Research Council and myself, provided challenges and opportunities for lively debates about Pacific research and evaluation issues for researcher and researched, including inter/intra-cultural considerations for best practice models, and Pacific research guidelines. The fono was of special significance for our Pacific graduate students who benefited immensely from the wealth of expertise and role models present.

The fono ended with caucusing and networking, a sumptuous meal and lively entertainment – Pasifika-style. A good time was had by all!! Malo lava AES!!

Dr Melani Ane is Director of the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland.
Conference reflections

Jennifer Leigh

I found the AES 2003 conference very worthwhile. I realised that even though I have not been involved in evaluation recently, the theories, concepts, tools and methodologies of evaluation are useful across research, planning and policy.

We were really fortunate to have two of the 'greats' in attendance, Michael Quinn Patton and Michael Scriven. Patton talked about the three different macro theories (linear logic model, systems model, and complexity or chaos model) and how they lead to asking different questions. These three approaches give us different insights into the use of evaluation. He also spoke of the need for training our organisational leaders in reality checking, looking at relationships within an organisation, and thinking about results and outcomes in different ways, so that evaluation becomes a way of thinking. On the other hand, Scriven talked about evaluation being the key to all applications - 'the mother of all disciplines'. He highlighted how evaluation was both the same as and different from other disciplines - it requires us to deal with values, it is not committed to explaining the phenomenon we study, and it is a service profession first and a knowledge profession second. He argued that we were in the 'whether it worked' business, not the 'why it worked' business.

Among the more interesting papers which I attended were the following:

The Renewed Outcomes Focus (Paul Duignan) - With the increasing focus on outcomes and unrealistic demands for outcome measurement, governments are now trying to define their 'essential few' outcomes which are being used to drive Statements of Intent. Some potential problems he identified in this approach were inadequate conceptual specification of outcomes, a lack of understanding of the difference between measurement and attribution, and consequently a growing number of 'pseudo-outcome studies'.

How Evaluation and Community Governance Making a Difference to Planning and Decision Making in a Small Community (Ellen Vasiliauskas) - an interesting use of community boards by local government in N oosa, Queensland, to engage more people in their strategic policies and planning procedures. The boards have proved successful as a way of generating community interest, getting community input and collecting data at a local level. Developing Relevant and Robust Indicators to Measure Program Outcomes (David Thomas) - this presentation looked at developing indicators as a specialist area in evaluation. Some of the issues highlighted were how we know indicators are appropriate, how there are often no suitable indicators available, the need to develop customised indicators, and indicators not being relevant across different programs. Dave stressed the need for indicators to be sensitive to short term change, suitable for use with small groups and projects and relevant to the main ethnic groups.

Risk Management and Evaluation - Linkages and Contrasts (Graham Smith) - this presentation looked at the links between risk management and evaluation. Risk management was seen as useful to evaluation because it asked the questions that clients often didn't want asked in evaluations. Although seen as competing methodologies, they really have a lot in common and should be talking more to each other.

The Success Case Method (Michael Scriven) - if you average the effects of a program, they often add up to nothing significant. This presentation was based on the notion of looking more closely at successful cases and not worrying about the failures. Identifying best and worst cases can be useful for determining why a program is successful.

Improving Evaluation Activity in the NZ State Sector (Treasury and State Services Commission) - this paper was a revelation because the State Services Commission has not been that visible in the evaluation debate in the past and Treasury have not been particularly helpful with their narrow focus on cost and efficiency. This initiative came out of the Review of the Centre, the Government's focus on outcomes, and concern about the lack of evaluation in the sector. As a result the emphasis is now on building an evaluative culture, giving guidance on reviewing performance as well as planning, evaluation training, and making changes in the budget process (i.e. taking the focus off continually creating new initiatives). The approach is about building capacity and seeking a cultural change rather than compliance. Amazingly positive but unfortunately there was no evaluation of the public sector itself and how it can manipulate and hinder evaluative practice.

Most remembered quote of the conference was 'if you have to prove a point with statistical analysis then you haven't proved it'.
Annual Awards 2003

Jenny Neale

There are five Awards offered annually by the Australasian Evaluation Society. The aim of the Awards is to encourage the development of evaluation and high-quality evaluation practice in Australasia. Each year the Awards Committee is pleased to see the variety of work nominated either by the evaluators or their colleagues and clients.

The Evaluation Training and Service (ET&S) Award

This award is presented to an AES member in recognition of an outstanding contribution to evaluation. The award for 2003 went to Maggie Jacob-Hoff. Maggie was the founder of the Auckland Evaluation group and has been a committee member since its inception in 1993. Not only was she involved with the planning of the AES Conference in Wellington in 1996, but she then took on being the convenor of the Auckland conference in 2003. Maggie has spent seventeen years as an evaluator and during that time has been involved in the production of 43 reports and publications. There can be no doubt that Maggie has made an outstanding contribution to evaluation and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

The Caulley-Tulloch Publication Prize

The aim of this award is to provide recognition to the best journal article or other publication in evaluation. It is funded by an endowment from Dr Darrel N. Caulley. The award for 2003 went to Bron McDonald, Patricia Rogers and Bruce Kefford for 'Teaching People to Fish? Building the Evaluation Capacity of Public Sector Organisations'. This article, published in Evaluation, makes a significant contribution to the debate around capacity building. To quote the editorial, 'A distinctive feature of this article is that it follows the development of evaluation capability in an Australian public sector case over the period of five years. This extended perspective allows the authors to identify phases in capability development and draw together “overarching recommendations”.'

The Evaluation Study Award

This is awarded to an individual or team which has conducted an evaluation study that has made, or has the potential to make, a significant contribution to the practice or use of evaluation in either the public or private sector in Australasia. The award for 2003 went to the Review and Evaluation Unit of the Queensland Police Service, namely Robert Lake, Angela Richardson, Diana Beere, Ruth Beach and Joe Nucifora, for 'Neighbourhood Police Beat: A guide to best practice in Queensland'. This evaluation had the aim of describing a 'model' Neighbourhood Police Beat with the secondary emphasis on identifying barriers to optimal operation. Clear links between policy and practice were demonstrated and evaluation capacity was enhanced by the incorporation of an evaluation framework that could be used by beat officers and has the potential to be used by other police persons.

The Evaluation Development Award - Evaluation Policies, Systems, Frameworks or Methodologies

This is awarded to an individual or team which has provided leadership or innovation with respect to the practice or use of evaluation in either the public or private sector. The scope includes programs, products, services, personnel, management strategies and other initiatives. The award for 2003 went to Julie Rolfe, Victorian Premier's Drug Prevention Council, and John Pilla, BearingPoint Australia, for 'Guide to Evaluating Drug Prevention Projects in Victoria'. A sound development process was used to develop an evaluation framework that would both deal with the diversity of programs and satisfy the needs of external agencies. The outcome was a tool that provides community based agencies with something they can use for self-evaluation and program development.

The Community Development Evaluation Award

The aim of this award is to encourage evaluations that contribute to community development. No award was made in this category for 2003.

Dr Jenny Neale is Chair of the AES Awards Committee.
Inaugural Fellows of the AES

The Board decided earlier in 2003 to recognise outstanding contributions to the Society and to evaluation in Australasia through the creation of a new category of membership - Fellows. The following inaugural Fellows were inducted at the 2003 conference dinner in Auckland:

Anona Armstrong (Victoria)

Colin Sharp (South Australia)

Ian Trotman (Wellington)

Chris Milne (NSW)

Sue Funnell (NSW)

John Owen (Victoria)

During the nearly twenty years of its existence, the Australasian Evaluation Society has had a number of very distinguished members who have made significant contributions over a period of years to both the Society and the field of evaluation. The Society felt it was appropriate to mark the 21st anniversary of the first evaluation conference in Australia by establishing a special category of membership to recognise those members who have made a long term contribution to the AES and the evaluation profession. The special membership category of Fellow is a positive step towards enhancing the professionalism of the society and maintaining an ongoing and mutually beneficial relationship with these individuals who are recognised leaders in the profession. The Fellows will work with the AES Board on strategic projects, contribute to annual conferences and other professional development initiatives, and promote the Society and its aims in their professional activities.

The Board has established a process for adding new Fellows on an annual basis. The policy and selection process for Fellows is available on the AES website at www.aes.asn.au
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP*

Title: ___________________________ Given Name: ___________________________ Surname: ___________________________

Position: ___________________________

Organisation: ___________________________

Address for Correspondence: ___________________________ State/Country: ___________________________ Postcode: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Work: ___________________________ Home: ___________________________ Mobile: ___________________________

Fax: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY: □ Personal □ Position

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR (tick one box only)

□ New Zealand Government □ Commonwealth Government Australia □ Private Sector

□ State Government Australia □ Local Government Australia □ Unwaged/retired

□ Not-for-Profit Organisation □ Other (incl. Overseas)

Higher Education □ Consultancy Firm

Privacy: Members' contact details are used to provide members with AES publications and information on national and regional activities. Details are published in the annual Directory of Members which is sent to all members and designed to facilitate professional networking and communication. Information is not provided to any other party or onsold to any other organisation or individuals.

FIELD OF INTEREST (please number in order)

□ Health □ Training □ Crime Prevention / Justice □ Information Technology

□ Human Services □ Community Development □ Public Sector □ Education

□ Evaluation Methodology □ Evaluation Theory □ Environment □ Human Resource Development

□ Indigenous Evaluation □ Transport □ Arts / Heritage / Culture □ Audit / Performance Measurement

Other ___________________________

PLEAS ATTACH DETAILS OF YOUR EVALUATION INTERESTS/QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE (no more that one A4 sheet)

NEW FEES FROM 1 OCTOBER

□ $A120 + $12 = $132 Full membership (incl. GST) – Australian Members

□ $A120 Full membership (excl. GST) – NZ & Overseas Members

□ $A65 Member of Canadian Evaluation Society (living outside Australasia)

□ $A65 +$6.50 = $71.50 Student* (incl. GST) – Australian Members *Please supply documentation

□ $A65 Student* (excl. GST) – NZ & Overseas Members

CREDIT CARD: Visa / Mastercard / Bankcard / AMEX accepted

Card Number: ___________________________ Card holder Name: ___________________________

Expiry Date: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

If accepted as a member, I will be bound by the Society’s Constitution and Code of Ethics. (Copies of the above documents are available on the Society’s website or through the AES Office.) I understand that my name and contact details will appear in both electronic and hard copy format in the AES Membership Directory.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

*Applications for membership require ratification by the AES Board. Applicants will be notified as soon as approval is received.
Evaluation and the policy context: the European experience

My talk today deals with the European experience with evaluation. A few points are necessary to frame what I am going to talk about.

First, I will be concerned with the development of a European tradition in evaluation, and I will consider two different instances of it:

■ European evaluation as it was developed by various European countries;

■ evaluation as it became understood inside the European Union context.

In both cases it is a matter of a diverse and multicultural political context.

Secondly, I will explore my topic against the international experience of evaluation, of which the Australasian one is an important part.

Thirdly, I will try to see how the European experience can contribute to an understanding of your theme, namely the politics of evaluation.

Fourthly, I will rely on the chronology of evaluation dissemination set out in the International Atlas of Evaluation (ed. Ray Rist, J.E. Furubo and R. Sandhal), which considers 25 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and Italy. That chronology identifies three phases, and two main causes for the genesis of evaluation: social programs, and the public sector reforms known as New Public Management (NPM).

The three main phases are:

1. the 60s and 70s, when the first programs of the Great Society were launched in the USA, where evaluation was mandated by legislative sunset clauses. In this period only Canada joined the US.¹

2. the 80s, when some countries within the Anglo-Saxon tradition started introducing NPM reforms in the public sector. Here the UK, Australia and New Zealand were foremost, and some Northern European continental countries followed suit.

3. the 90s, when evaluation was extended to many more countries, thanks to an external push coming from larger agencies, such as the EU for many European countries, or the World Bank or other international agencies for Third World countries like China, Korea and Zimbabwe. In this period the evaluation community has grown internationally, creating networks and links that make for much greater communication than in the past.
Old Europe and evaluation

Speaking in New Zealand, a ‘new’ country where you are celebrating the 21st anniversary of the AES, it is easy to think of ourselves through the stereotype of ‘old Europe’. Indeed, from the point of view of evaluation, Europe has not been an innovator – our EES has been founded only in 1995. Why did evaluation come so late to our shores?

I see three main reasons:

a. A strong ideological tradition of state intervention in socio-economic affairs – the welfare state was born here. In Europe there could have been nothing like the debate on state intervention that accompanied the introduction of the War on Poverty and opened the way to evaluation. In Europe nobody doubts (at least until recently) the need for public provision of social services and for the implementation of public policies: the latter are goods in themselves, which do not need evaluating. The highly ideological debates refer to the amount of social spending (inputs) rather than to outputs or outcomes.

b. An administrative tradition, at least in continental countries that have administrative law, according to which the public servant is judged on the legitimacy of his/her actions, not by their results. Procedure comes first, outcomes come if they may.

c. A strong presence of trade unions in the public sector that are more interested in workers’ rights (which they feel are threatened by evaluation!) than in citizens’ needs.

This mix has produced a malfunctioning of the state, and at the same time an inability to reform. This situation has evolved in the 90s. The UK, home of Lord Beveridge and of the universalistic model of the welfare state, has moved to public sector reforms that have also been adopted in other continental countries, with various ideological blending (from the French left-wing government of Rocard to the Italian centre-left governments of the 90s, to other conservative governments). In the same period, the evaluation community in the other countries had come to maturity, and this had made room for dialogue and debate among those people in Europe who became concerned with evaluation. It was clear that we could learn from each other. The European Evaluation Society was founded in 1995.

The first wave: Social Programs

Program evaluation started in the US with the Great Society. What was created then were new political tools, new ways of acting to tackle social problems, and a new practice, that of evaluation.

Just to remind you briefly of some main points:

- Programs can be understood as actions for the purpose of obtaining a change, and they have to be implemented with given means in order to obtain intended results within a given deadline.
- They require evaluation in order to know whether they were effective.
- A method for evaluation had to be worked out. Some thought it was just a question of methodology, but things were not that easy: positivist and constructivist paradigms opposed each other, the former proposing variable analysis (following the teachings of the Bureau of Applied Social Research) and experimentalism (Campbell), the latter proposing qualitative analysis and actors’ involvement (Stake’s responsive evaluation, Guba and Lincoln’s fourth generation evaluation). And Patton tried to tame the ‘methodological dragon’. Later on (in the late 80s) this problem was addressed by way of multi-method approaches (Greene and Caracelli). Others spoke of a logic of evaluation (Scriven).

From the beginning, evaluation has been dogged by the ‘black box’ problem: programs were conceived as a causal sequence, but often without explaining why a certain result should be the effect of a program seen as its cause. Attention was first given to this problem by Chen and Rossi (1989), and especially by Carol Weiss (1997).

The main legacy of this period is therefore twofold:

- the paradigm debate should be mastered by some form of pluralism of methods
- the black box problem needs an elaboration, which has subsequently taken the form of the theory-based approaches.

Nothing of the kind was present in Europe at this time. The 70s were a decade of great structural reforms (in Italy, a reform of the health system and social security): all hopes rested on the political decision, and there was an assumption that implementation would follow. At the same time, programs would have been considered partial, fragmentary, not up to the situation.

Not having participated in the first wave, and in its debates, the European evaluation community is thus not aware of the sufferings of the beginning. So when it later entered the field, there was an expectation of finding ready-made methods and techniques. Analogously, it was not aware of the need to avoid certain errors, which were repeated (one is not vaccinated against committing the same errors). For instance, there was scarcely any knowledge, not only of the first paradigm wars...
between the positivist and constructivist approaches to evaluation, but also of their overcoming through Patton’s sweeping critiques of the methodological dragon, though multi-method approaches and the ‘paradigm of choice’ (Patton, 1986). This means that we are still waging a rearguard war between qualitative and quantitative methods. This has been reinforced by the EU, which initially imposed a strong quantitative imprint, while qualitative methods, for all the discourse on methodological pluralism, still have to fight for acceptance.

The second wave: New Public Management

At the beginning of the 80s, with a growing fiscal crisis in welfare states, a new challenge emerged in industrialised states which had expanded social policies: that of reducing public spending.

A new way of thinking about the role of the state emerged, which posed different questions for evaluation. This was the idea of the New Public Management (NPM), developed first in Australia and New Zealand, but also in some European countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000).

At the beginning of the 80s, with a growing fiscal crisis in welfare states, a new challenge emerged in industrialised states which had expanded social policies: that of reducing public spending.

The characteristics of NPM can be summarised as follows:

- There is a change in the role of the state, ‘steering, not rowing’ (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Not all state functions are equally important: the specific function of the state is to lead, to give orientation, not to execute.
- Therefore, many functions can be outsourced to private or third sector agencies.
- What regulates this relationship is the ‘principal/agent’ concept, according to which there are distinct roles and responsibilities for the ‘principal’ (the state agency), which is interested in the outcome of an intervention, and the ‘agent’, (the contractor), who is responsible for the output of an action.

This system poses new problems for evaluation:

- New evaluation criteria become prominent, beyond effectiveness: see in particular the UK elaboration of the concept of ‘value for money’, meaning that there must be a direct return for every penny spent. In practice, this has meant a growing attention to efficiency.
- A new distinction comes into currency: that between accountability and learning. Both are new concepts. While it could be said that a knowledge function was present from the beginning, owing to the social science background of the first evaluators, the learning function draws attention toward the ability of actors and stakeholders to benefit from the evaluation. On the other hand, having identified the agent more clearly, s/he is held accountable to the principal for his/her actions.

Two main problems have been raised with regard to this new phase. The first is a corollary of the principal/agent concept: the separation between the leading role of the principal and the executive role of the agent. This separation can be interpreted under many different lights, but I would distinguish between its ‘adversarial’ and ‘collaborative’ aspects.

It displays its adversarial aspect when principal and agent behave as two separate agencies, with conflicting goals. On the one hand, the principal aims at getting a given result by the simple means of disbursing a sum of money, without having to engage in a fatiguing administrative task. On the other hand, the agent aims to keep the contract going, and the money coming in, often being more interested in the maintenance of his/her own income stream than in the program goals. This can be seen when agents win contracts for something they are well versed in, irrespective of the policy goals. This conflict can have negative repercussions for evaluation:

- Line agencies or contractors (agents) feel responsible only for the output they are expected to deliver, not for how it leads to the outcome. A consequence of this is that agents easily accept monitoring of their activity (which is what they have contracted to deliver), but not evaluation, which would call them to test for something they feel to be outside their control. As a result, they will develop strategies of resistance to evaluation.

- Ministries (principals) are mainly interested in the process of contracting out, since they leave the action to the agent, hoping that a good contract will produce a good product. When it comes to evaluation, they praise ex-ante evaluation, and are not interested in ex-post evaluation, often preceding on the false assumption that good specification of requirements in contracts leads to good results, in the same way as the program designers’ bias that a well designed program will bring good results.

The combined result of these two tendencies is actually to undermine evaluation.

However, that same relationship could display collaborative aspects. This situation could be studied through Robert Behn’s concept of ‘democratic mutual accountability’ (Behn, 2001), according to which a sharp separation between
principal and agent can be counter-productive: the principal should be responsible for placing the agent in the best position to act, the agent should feel responsible for the outcome.

In order to achieve this, it would be necessary to bring principal and agent closer. They should share goals, not have their own complementary (indeed, conflicting) ones. Both (not only the principal) should contribute to program elaboration, goal definition, etc. They should understand that they can both benefit from evaluation, the principal by following the various phases of the intervention, and not only the ex-ante evaluation; the agent by considering process evaluation as a force for empowerment by building his/her capacity to address the present, and other future, situations in which he/she is engaged. Picciotto summarised this in discussing international development evaluation, advocating that the partners (which is already a collaborative concept), i.e. donor agencies and beneficiaries, should ‘share objectives, have distinct accountabilities, have reciprocal obligations’ (AJE, 2003, p. 232).

The second problem was that the principal/agent concept can only deal with single activities, but it is unable to account for mixed interventions, even though the latter represent the great majority of programs (Turner and Washington, 2002).

What happened in Europe during this second wave?

■ Some European states introduced systems of NPM, and evaluation as a consequence of this. In some cases this led to an exaggeration: see the ‘audit explosion’ in the UK, as exposed by Michael Powell (1997).

■ The EU introduced programs for social and territorial rebalancing. The first such programs were called ‘Poverty’ (reminiscent of the US ‘War on Poverty’). Other important programs were the ‘Integrated Mediterranean Programs’, which have been pivotal for mandating evaluation.

The third wave: Evaluation Diffusion

During the 90s evaluation has become widespread all over Europe, with a combination of the two previous trends. In almost every nation there were public sector reforms introducing some aspect of NPM (e.g. in France through the left-wing Rocard government, in Italy through the centre-left government), meeting with greater or lesser resistance. At the same time, in the social, public health, employment, environmental, education and other sectors, political systems became more open to working with programs, which in due course became more and more complex, integrated and multidimensional.

In these instances, there is a growing interest in getting methods and techniques from the outside, but also in the development of original approaches. National characteristics thus came into play, with the UK and the Nordic countries more linked to the Anglo-Saxon debate, and other countries building on their own cultural traditions.

But a crucial spur to evaluation has been the external push coming from the EU Structural Funds (social funds for human resources and employment, for territorial rebalancing and social cohesion, and for rural development) which have represented a great mobilisation of financial and human resources, and have required monitoring and evaluation of their results. This push has brought with it a special evaluation style, which initially has had a greater impact on countries of the third wave of evaluation institutionalisation, but is also at work in countries of the second wave.

Indeed, the EU has developed a complex system of multi-level governance that is a strange mix of social programs and principal/agent principles, of which a specific architecture of evaluation is a crucial element. To understand how all this works, it is necessary to remember that the EU is a federal system, which has both similarities with and differences from other federal systems such as the USA, Canada or Australia. As in the latter cases, there is a division of competencies among levels (in the EU we have: EU, state, region, municipality), and a devolution of many tasks to the lower levels. What distinguishes the European experience, however, is the legacy of its history. The EU was born after centuries of wars between the states that now compose it, which now have decided to live in peace: European unity is a gradual process of unification, by which individual states give up bits of their sovereignty in order to build a new entity. Diversity and multiculturalism are contributory elements, assets to be maintained through an original model, which I would describe as follows.

The policies which the European Union applies establish broad goals: territorial re-equilibrium and social cohesion, integrated rural development, human resources development (along the axes of employability, entrepreneurship, flexibility and equal opportunity). All these broad goals cover multiple dimensions of reality.

The decision-making process:

■ is characterised by incremental negotiations about conflicting interests among states, or between states and the EU Commission (especially when their governments are on the other side of politics from the EU commissioners);

■ is limited to financial contribution: the main conflict of interests hinges on allocations to the states;
tends to incorporate the many vested interests of beneficiaries, implementers, etc., which, by the way, do not want to be checked by a non-political activity like evaluation.

This system of multi-level governance is characterised by the motto 'the EU states goals, not means'; the latter are established at the lower levels. In brief, the process is:

- the EU establishes general goals and allocates money to the states,
- the states establish specific/intermediate goals and allocate money to the regions (or provinces, or municipalities, or specific sectors), and
- the lower levels decide on programs and interventions, and it is here that the money is spent.

The rule that regulates the relationships among these levels is the principle of 'subsidiarity': the higher level does not do what the lower level can do. An evaluation logic follows from all this:

- the EU is more interested in financial evaluation (how the money is spent) than in effectiveness of the interventions - at least this is what happened in the beginning;
- an evaluation hierarchy has been instituted corresponding to the multiple levels of governance: evaluations have been mandated at the EU, state and local level in order to assess the corresponding level of spending. In the beginning, it was mainly a matter of commissioning evaluations, now it is a matter of creating evaluation units.

Analogous with what happened with the principal/agent principle under NPM, European subsidiarity can develop adversarial aspects as well as collaborative ones. There have been adversarial aspects when the lower level did not want the EU or the state to intrude into their own affairs: a new regionalism and localism that fought for extreme devolution. But it is possible to develop collaborative aspects, when the top is concerned with helping the lower levels do what they can do best, with latent resources, etc.: what we call 'active subsidiarity'.

The following table can illustrate the range of options open to the actors in this system of governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL/AGENT</th>
<th>SUBSIDIARITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>adversarial</strong></td>
<td>■ principal responsible for outcome,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ do not share goals: conflict of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ agent accepts control, but not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ principal is only interested in ex-ante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ strict vertical division of competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ lower level does not want higher to meddle with it: extreme devolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ top level only interested in financial control, not in effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>collaborative</strong></td>
<td>■ principal and agent share goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ principal and agent are both interested in success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ agent accepts evaluation of how output leads to outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ the top is concerned with what the bottom can do (helps exploit latent resources)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY | ACTIVE SUBSIDIARITY |

**Current European predicaments for evaluators: remedies, alternatives**

So far we have seen the premises (complexity of dimensions, plurality of levels). Now let's look at the problems. What do evaluators do when the top level states goals, not means? Based on the table above, one could see two alternatives.

The first corresponds to the adversarial mode. The top is only interested in assessing whether goals were achieved, not in how they were achieved (variety is admissible, but not relevant):

- the emphasis is on broad indicators of goal achievement;
- they are used in a pre-post verification logic, not even an experimental one, because there is no identification of a program (experimental) situation vs a non-program (control) situation.

The limitation of this approach is that there is neither learning (little understanding of the process) nor accountability, because the link between the agent/implementer and the principal/EU is too
The second alternative corresponds to the collaborative mode. The top level is interested in understanding what works better, where and why. Therefore, it has to develop ways of understanding differences. In this case, it is constantly concerned with the lower levels, in line with the options of mutual accountability and active subsidiarity. Here we would find a learning organisation approach, in which all parties were involved in actively producing information for evaluation.

However, this is not the framework by which the EU users of evaluation judge the evaluations that they receive up the ladder. Their usual grounds for dissatisfaction with the quality of evaluations are low-quality data, evaluators who are too politicised and not independent, and evaluations that are not clear about the program logic - ex-ante evaluations are not good, the logic of action is missing, there is no evaluability assessment, etc. In other words, evaluations are considered inadequate because they neither perform the task of generalising results (summative evaluations) nor offer suggestions for improvement (formative evaluations). All this is usually attributed to the complexity and ambiguity of programs that 'seldom have well-specified or quantifiable objectives' and to 'poorly-developed monitoring systems' (Summa and Toulemonde, 2002, p. 417).

Two main remedies are proposed:

a) work with the program logic. Various models are proposed of the vertical links between general goals (at the EU level), intermediate goals (state levels) and operational goals (local, intervention level). This would make it possible to understand causal links between what happens at the various levels;

b) establish best practices. Identify the best application of planned interventions (actions, services, etc.).

These remedies to poor-quality evaluation are at odds with the policy of 'stating goals not means'. Instead of proposing how to account for the complexity and variation that is implied in the latter, they consider them as an accident to be overcome through models and generalisations. Consequently, the higher level is a passive recipient of information.

The first alternative deals with the program logic: it refers to the social program tradition and its developments. Take the MEANS guides, which distinguish between the 'hierarchy of objectives' and the 'logical diagram of expected impacts' (vol. 1, p. 93 and 95):

- The former works from the top down, establishing a cascade of objectives: the results of the higher level are the goals of the lower one.
- The latter works from the bottom up. The assumption is: to get certain results you have to do certain things; if you do a then you will get result b, which will have impact c.

The logic behind these models is that there is only one theory of how things get done – the right theory – and that the program is articulated into a series of virtual linear chains moving from the results of local intervention, to the effect on performance of national programs, up to the impact of EU policies.

However, to be in tune with the complexity problems of the EU multi-level governance, we could elaborate what I would call a 'theory-based evaluation for complexity'. I see two main versions of this:

- using Carol Weiss's (1997) approach, we could say that among implementers of the big policies there are many theories: let's see what mechanism worked in a specific situation; let's ask stakeholders, implementers, etc. This approach is likely to be more friendly toward the various stakeholders who implement, and benefit from, any European program;

- using Pawson and Tilley's (1997) realistic evaluation, we could say that the outcome depends on the combination between a given mechanism (incentives, regulations, persuasion, providing services or training) and the context.

- how people embedded in different situations decide to use them. Although there is argument against the idea of programs as 'change agents', seen as something imposing change from above; in the realistic evaluation concept, by contrast, programs are seen as opportunities that the beneficiaries may decide to take, and hence as facilitators of a change that remains in the hands of actors. The combination of mechanism-context-outcome will tell us 'what worked better, where, in what circumstances and why'.

While the hierarchy of objectives is separate from context, and assumes that a given tool
always works in the same way, these theory-based approaches start from complexity of aspects and multiplicity of contexts, and assume that what will work is always a combination of tools. Let me take the example of European employment policy. The EU goal is raising the employment rate. The state goal is to improve matching between labour supply and demand. The local intervention consists of creating employment centres. There are however, various problems:

- **context**: each site has a different labour market (tight/slack; manual/clerical jobs available);
- **tools**: there are many tools for that goal; there can be a different combination of tools in each site;
- **theory**: it should explain why a given tool works better in a given context, e.g. where are a high proportion of employment occurs in the informal economy, the primary need may be for measures to identify those opportunities.

**‘Best’ practices or ‘good’ practices?**

The logic of ‘best practice’ is an attempt at establishing that all situations are alike (it is possible to generalise), and that some actors are just better than others. Invariably, some places are always better (Italian example: the province of Emilia-Romagna) and some always worse (Southern Italy in general). If the latter are not up to the former, it is their fault.

In my opinion, the opposite is true. Nothing can be considered best for all situations, and hence generalisable. But there are different situations, and something that has shown to be good somewhere perhaps could be studied and adapted/imitated somewhere else. All this could be attained if there were a continuous interaction between lower and higher levels of the hierarchy, if good practices were reflected in good theories, and there were learning about it. But nothing of the kind is possible inside the existing institutional hierarchy of the EU system of evaluation, where

- lower levels are expected to do only monitoring, not real evaluation; and
- higher levels do not receive contributions from below.

Such a link between theory and practice would allow for realisation of the learning organisation principle, in which mutual accountability would prevail. At the lower level, if people knew what they were doing, what to expect, and how they could contribute to the outcome, then they would be more favourably disposed to evaluation, and understand that it is for their good. At the higher level, theories received from below would be more grounded, and better suited to understanding a complex and diverse situation.

**To conclude**

Contrary to what happened up to ten years ago, the European scene is now an integral part of the international evaluation community. Individual European countries... are influenced by a new governance model, the multi-level governance of the EU. Contrary to what happened up to ten years ago, the European scene is now an integral part of the international evaluation community. Individual European countries... are influenced by a new governance model, the multi-level governance of the EU.
References
Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G., 2000, Public Sector Reform, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Endnotes
1 In fact, there are European countries that claim to have established evaluation at this time: Germany, with its Länder system that imitates the American federalism, a strong facilitator of the first social experiments; Sweden, which imitated the US with its program of ‘The strong society’ (Vedung, 1997, p. 27).
2 In Europe, multiculturalism does not refer to a problem of integrating minorities: it is the very texture of the European society that is multicultural.
3 Ryan (2003, p. 13) raises a similar point in an article on monitoring and evaluation in Australia and New Zealand.
4 The same happened with program evaluation in the US when Weiss, Cronbach, Patton, among others, put the policy context at the centre of evaluation, as against the positivist tradition that considered it as a ‘threat to validity’.
5 I refer to Patton’s keynote speech to the 2003 AES conference [text not available owing to technical malfunction – Eds.].
6 Perhaps one could see here a similarity with what Ryan says of the Australian situation: ‘Australia wanted too much evaluation too quickly’ (2003, p. 7).
7 One could guess that the great popularity of realistic evaluation owes much to its focusing on differences in context, which is central to the European perception.
Greetings.

I wish to acknowledge and pay my respect to the Maori elders, bothers and sisters of Aotearoa. I would like to particularly thank the elders for their welcome this morning and to thank the AES Committee for my invitation to attend the conference. As a Kamilaroi man and, as I understand it, the first Indigenous Australian to present a keynote address at any AES forum, I feel very proud and hope that my words today do justice to this honour.

I particularly acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional custodians of this area, the local Iwi, Ngati Paoa from Tanui Waka, on whose tribal grounds we meet today. I thank them for the honour of being able to visit and to speak on their country.

Qualification 1: Emphasise that my paper/presentation represents AN Indigenous Australian perspective and not THE Indigenous Australian perspective and for this reason my paper is specifically so entitled.

Qualification 2: I am not a professional ‘evaluator’ but I do have some experience in the context of research, policy and program development and implementation, project management and the evaluation of such activities in the Australian Indigenous domain.

Acknowledgements

Briefly, I need to acknowledge and thank some colleagues: Mr Ed Wensing, Ms Jacquie Lambert, Dr Peter Veth, Dr Rob Bourke, Mr Rod Alfredson and Ms Wai-Fong Yik for their supportive critique of earlier drafts of this paper; and Ms Kate McKegg and Ms Brenda Smith for their warm welcome to Auckland and for making my visit so enjoyable and informative.

Introduction

In my presentation today I want to discuss the ethics involved in conducting evaluations involving Indigenous communities, the implications for evaluators and the need for a renewed focus on ethical evaluation practices in inter-cultural contexts. I also wish to highlight the need for the development of a new relationship between the Indigenous community and the evaluation profession.

Although I readily recognise the significance of the interdisciplinary nature of evaluation, my address today will specifically focus on issues which are inter-cultural, essentially involving differences between western and Indigenous worldviews. And I use the term ‘inter-cultural’ advisedly. I mean something very different from the more frequently used term of...
my early professional experience with evaluations

which the practice of evaluation occurs.

in some detail, the inter-cultural contexts within
evaluation, then you need to be prepared to explore,
you generally share the foregoing perspectives about
following challenge to the evaluation profession. If

6. a capacity to produce conclusions and
5. effective communication with the client;
4. a commitment to consultation with the people
3. an effort to collect useful and relevant
2. the need to apply a systematic problem solving
1. a clear appreciation of what the whole exercise

So, as a staring point for discussion, I make the
following challenge to the evaluation profession. If
you generally share the foregoing perspectives about
evaluation, then you need to be prepared to explore,
in some detail, the inter-cultural contexts within
which the practice of evaluation occurs.

In preparing this paper, through reflection about
my early professional experience with evaluations
in Australian Indigenous community settings, I
was reminded of the frequent material variances
between the formal findings and recommendations
of evaluation reports and the understandings and
perceptions held by the Indigenous community
- essentially involving judgements and conclusions
about the same events and activities!

At the time, I questioned why is this so? Why
the huge variances in views and findings between
trained, professional evaluators and the Indigenous
community stakeholders? Could such variances
be explained simply as part of any difference in
intellectual capacity of the parties involved and/or
explained through the misunderstandings between
say the bureaucracy and community?

The answer is, of course - no. The issues involved
are far more complex and culturally deep-rooted!

There is currently a prime example of such
a variance of views, perceptions and findings
in the Australian context in the debate about
Indigenous/non-Indigenous historical relationship
since colonisation. Many people will be aware
that past methodologies employed and the findings
in researching and articulating this historical
relationship have been, and continue to be,
vigorously contested in the public domain in
Australia. Indeed, the disputation involved is
not simply confined to any dialectic airing of
Indigenous versus non-Indigenous views, but also
includes hotly contested and competing views
involving various disciplines (and ideological
factions) within academia.

Paradoxically, many well-informed and
perhaps well-meaning commentators also often
remind us that, as Australians, we all enjoy a
'shared history'.

One could therefore suggest that this relatively
short, shared 215 year experience of colonial and
post-colonial history should not present such a
difficult academic and/or evaluative challenge. Any
objective observer might question why so much of
this black/white history is so vehemently disputed.

Leaving aside any discussion of imbalance in the
costs/benefits in the sharing of Australian history,
any 'objective' evaluation of this shared historical
experience, irrespective of whether one might be
applying either a so-called 'black-armband' or
'white-blindfold' perspective, is influenced by a
diversity of factors and perspectives (including the
nature of records (and silences) in public and private
historical accounts). All of these factors, in my view,
have unavoidable and undeniable cultural, or rather
inter-cultural, manifestations and consequences.

So an explanation for the variances I have
mentioned in evaluation outcomes can be found, to
a very large degree, in the significant inter-cultural
differences in experience, ideology and origins of
'practice' between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous
evaluators and stakeholders involved.

And we need to recognise that such variances
in evaluation outcomes, caused by inter-cultural
factors, are still occurring in contemporary
evaluation practice today and require some redress.

In fact, if my address today contains any
significant message it is this: that the evaluation
profession itself needs to move beyond rhetoric
to reality in its practice. In so saying, I mean that
the issues highlighted by me in this paper may not
be new concepts to many (or indeed the majority)
of people attending this conference - and these
principles have been expounded and advocated long
and hard by many Indigenous and non-Indigenous
peoples alike over recent years - and I am also
aware elements have been explored in previous
AES conferences to varying degrees. However, the
profession needs to realistically evaluate itself in an
effort to determine whether or not these principles
are truly being embraced in actual practice.

From my own personal and professional
perspective, there remains considerable work to be
done. Over the last 7 years, through my work at
Effective evaluations require consideration and analysis of the inter-cultural differences.

The legacies of such inappropriate, unethical, disrespectful, disempowering practices are deeply entrenched in the collective past and recent memory of the Australian Indigenous community. This lamentable history and relationship needs to be recognised, put on the table and dealt with as a precursor to more enlightened, contemporary attempts to deal with any specific inter-cultural differences in our relationships.

Inter-cultural differences are manifested through differences in who we are and our histories, in our knowledge and ways of knowing, in our ways of behaving and relating to others and how we do business, in our ways of owning and sharing knowledge, and in the differences, application and weighting of our respective cultural values.

So, as professional evaluators, we need to recognise that evaluations do not occur in a cultural or ethical vacuum – even if the research is of a high quality and is well intentioned.

Effective evaluations require consideration and analysis of the inter-cultural differences I just spoke of. Any evaluation involving Indigenous communities must be of value to all stakeholders, including the Indigenous community and, in this context, I readily admit that I see the role of evaluators as being one of potential agents of change or at least to offer this opportunity to groups hosting the study.

Even in a context where certain ‘outcomes’ appear clear or obvious and unlikely to be disputed, effective evaluation still requires appreciation and exploration of the inter-cultural issues and differences that may be present.

Such cultural issues can be extremely complex. They require proper exploration and consideration and extend to the examination of the cultural settings pertaining to the activity, project or community service which is being evaluated - as well as the questioning of those who are conducting the evaluation, including their methodologies, their language and their capacity to understand inter-cultural issues.

In referring to ‘inter-cultural’ issues and contexts etc in this paper, I am specifically referring to the interaction or intersection between two distinct cultural domains represented by Indigenous and non-Indigenous (or predominantly Western) cultures.

Professor Martin Nakata, an eminent Australian Indigenous academic with a particular interest in the field of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of constructing and maintaining knowledge, refers to this Indigenous/non-Indigenous inter-cultural space as the ‘Cultural Interface’.

Nakata reminds us that the Cultural Interface is actually a space that is the reality of contemporary social existence. He states that the Cultural Interface is: ‘the place where we live and learn, the place that conditions our lives, the place that shapes our futures and, more to the point, the place where we are active agents in our lives – where we make decisions – our lifeworld’ (Nakata 2002:9,10).

Nakata also highlights that the Cultural Interface is a place where cultural boundaries are not always clear and where cultural tensions are ever present and require negotiation. In the context of any evaluation activity these points need to be remembered.

In taking an Indigenous standpoint, Nakata also insightfully reminds us that as Indigenous peoples, everyday we are influenced by both Indigenous ways (‘traditional forms and ways of knowing, or the residue of these’), as well as by Non-Indigenous (‘Western’) ways and that ‘for many of us a blend of both has become our lifeworld’ (Nakata 2002:9). Indigenous and Western worldviews are being actively combined and (re)negotiated by Indigenous peoples to present new ways for understanding and negotiating with other cultures and with ourselves in a post-colonial world.

In so saying, Nakata (2002:9) states that:
...Indigenous peoples do traverse these intersecting discourses on a daily basis, responding, interacting, taking positions, making decisions and in the process re-making cultures – ways of knowing, being and acting. In Indigenous individuals, communities and the broader collective, differences in responses and in the priority given to different systems of Knowledge and thinking illustrate the dynamism and diversity within the collective. This dynamism and diversity reflects the original heterogeneity of traditional contexts, the varied experience and impact of colonisation, the diversity of contexts in which Indigenous Australians now live and the creativity of the mind in devising ways to bridge systems of Knowledge and understanding and respond to changing circumstances (emphasis added).

In this paper, I am attempting to highlight the point that evaluations, or more importantly evaluators, need to take steps to devise ways to bridge systems of knowledge and understanding and respond to changing circumstances. Evaluators need to take much stronger account in evaluation practices of the cultural influences at play – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

However in this issue, like Nakata, I am adopting an Indigenous standpoint, or perhaps even a bias, in stating that whilst most evaluators are familiar with the dominant cultural influences, my own experience suggests that, in the main, they remain uninformed about many aspects of the prevailing Indigenous cultural context in which they may be operating.

Having made the point that professional evaluators need to be much more attuned to inter-cultural factors in conducting evaluations involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people or communities, I now want to focus on some key points that might make evaluation practices more inter-culturally attuned and therefore more effective and useful.

In highlighting some key principles and issues, I draw heavily on the ethical principles that my own organisation, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has developed as a result of well over three decades of inclusive involvement and experience in research in the inter-cultural context in Australia.

The AIATSIS principles are articulated in Attachment 1 to this paper and are grouped under three sub-headings:

- Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding,
- Respect, recognition and involvement, and
- Benefits, outcomes and agreement.

As a basic tenet, approaches to evaluative research involving Indigenous people must be based on respect for Indigenous peoples’ inherent right to self-determination, and our right to control and maintain our culture and heritage.

Heritage can never be alienated, surrendered or sold, except for conditional use. Sharing therefore creates a relationship between the givers and receivers of knowledge. The givers retain the authority to ensure that knowledge is used properly and the receivers continue to recognize and repay the gift.

Accordingly, in my view it is imperative that evaluators adopt, as a non-negotiable operational ethos, approaches which demonstrate professional respect and commitment to ensuring that:

- Indigenous peoples are involved in and consulted as legitimate participants in any evaluation project that concerns them;
- a shared understanding be achieved between the evaluators and the Indigenous peoples about the aims and methods of the evaluation; and that
- Indigenous peoples must be informed – in ways that are useful and accessible – and share in the results and flow-on outcomes of the evaluation.

At every stage, I repeat, at every stage, including during the preliminary scoping and design of the methodology, evaluative research with and about Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the evaluators and the Indigenous peoples concerned.

This must be underpinned by the critically important notion that any Indigenous decision-making must be based on free and fully informed consent.
The cost of carrying out evaluations in ignorance of the inter-cultural contexts is inestimable. In the context of evaluations in the inter-cultural settings - and particularly in the Australian context - I would like to make an important point.

In the Indigenous domain, the results and, therefore the value, of some discrete individual evaluations involving small or modest programs are often problematic. The health and socio-economic status of Indigenous Australians reflect our current level of severe disadvantage and the underlying causes are complex and, as inferred earlier, result from the historical, political, social and cultural effects of our colonial and post colonial existence. However, often individual program evaluations (such as modest health, environmental health, legal services and housing programs) either fail to take account of the complexity of these inter-cultural and other related influences at play, and as a result, can misleadingly show favourable results or conversely may indicate program failings but without proper consideration of the totality of the broader picture and related systems. In the inter-cultural context of evaluations, this issue is an important factor and needs to be very seriously considered and explored in the future.

**Implications for evaluators**

So what are the implications of the broad ethical principles I have mentioned for evaluative practices in inter-cultural contexts? There are six points I want to make in answer to this question.

Firstly, as I have already said, I should acknowledge that the principles I have referred to are not exactly brand new concepts and that for many evaluators they should not involve any dramatic change of direction. In the Australian context many evaluators and researchers are already following these principles, including that of developing collaborative projects with clear benefits[11] to the researched communities through formal agreements with the respective Indigenous groups involved and I would be very surprised if this is not also the case in New Zealand.

Secondly, I would anticipate that many researchers/evaluators would have no difficulty in continuing their work or adapting their projects to meet any cultural, ethical or other concerns from Indigenous groups. However, it must be said that some evaluators and researchers, hopefully a minority, may have to seriously re-evaluate their activities or indeed their future as professional evaluators if they choose to ignore concerns raised by Indigenous groups or communities.

Thirdly, I would expect that, with evaluation/research projects being based on proper consultation, the negotiation of free and informed consent, and a mutual understanding of the specific aims and intentions of evaluations, a greater degree of productive inter-cultural evaluative research collaboration will result.

Fourthly, evaluations based on a greater recognition and respect for Indigenous involvement and our knowledge systems, will result in much better evaluative results being accomplished. The findings and conclusions of such evaluation practices are far less likely to be contested and the outcomes will be of much greater value to the stakeholders involved.

Fifthly, I am confident that non-coercive, open, frank negotiation around explicit issues and agreement regarding protocols and the use of research results, will not only identify clear benefits for the researched community, but also for those who commission evaluations and the profession itself.

Lastly, I would make the point that explicit agreements about the ownership of intellectual property, copyright and further dissemination and publication of results will lessen misunderstandings and disputes about the use and application of the results.

If evaluation projects involving inter-cultural factors are not prepared to embrace the principles I have outlined above, then, in my view and put simply, they should not be funded – as any such funding decisions would represent poor business and investment decisions. The justification for my view is based on my experience in Australia. Such evaluations will lack inter-cultural integrity. Their outcomes will be less than accurate, and they may require additional effort or material additional financial resources to remedy any short-comings. In this regard, from my experience, poor initial scoping and planning, incorporating proper consideration of the inter-cultural aspects of evaluations, are the most significant cause of acute problems later in the process – and can and should be avoidable.

I do not necessarily envisage that all will be ‘plain sailing’ in establishing and adopting appropriate inter-cultural approaches to evaluation or research projects from the outset. Some evaluators/researchers have already raised problems, which essentially go to the key questions about the freedom and the (dare I say in some cases, almost divine) rights of evaluators and researchers. I feel these concerns are largely illusory. I also think that some rebalancing of the power equation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests in the evaluation and research fields is long over-due.

Ultimately, of course, Indigenous communities will seek to exert their right to either approve or reject their involvement in any evaluation proposals. Similarly, evaluators/researchers will also have the right to reject undue impositions and restrictions upon themselves. Both must be free to look elsewhere for the appropriate collaborative effort.

However, I remain optimistic that through greater awareness and understanding of the inter-cultural and ethical issues at play, any non-productive, stalemate
situations will be avoided and potential inter-cultural evaluation ‘no-go zones’ will be eliminated.

Mutual respect must be the key. The evaluation/research community and the Indigenous community must acknowledge the respective skills brought together in any evaluation project.

The cultural and intellectual proper rights12 of all participants in a research project must be recognised. The rights to ownership by appropriate Indigenous community members of their cultural heritage must not be alienated by evaluators/researchers who fail to recognize these rights and to acknowledge their sources.

This is an important matter which has proved to be highly contentious. It is often at the nub of an imbalance in the research relationship, particularly in relation to the misuse of evaluation and research results.

Surely, gone are the days when the colonial settlers took for granted the use and exploitation of Indigenous cultural knowledge and intellectual property without prior informed consent and without any benefit and/or recompense to the rightful Indigenous owners? Such consent must be obtained without any undue influence or interference in decision making by the Indigenous community concerned.

Ultimately, there must be respect for the ownership by Indigenous peoples of their cultural knowledge, intellectual property and heritage. Similarly, there must be respect for the intellectual expertise of principled evaluators and researchers.

The development of ethical inter-cultural professional practices

An organisation such as the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) should and undoubtedly does provide leadership in the field of ethical evaluation practices.

To this end, I note that the AES has already invested considerable time and energy in the development of its own institutional Code of Ethics, articulated through the AES document Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.

I note that these guidelines ‘are designed to suit the cultural, social and institutional contexts of evaluation in Australia and New Zealand’ (AES Guidelines p. 4 – emphasis added) and that, similar to our approach at AIATSIS, provide advice which looks at the ‘before’, ‘during’ and ‘after’ aspects of evaluation practices.

I see little purpose in my attempting any comprehensive critique of AES guidelines today and, in any case, I would assume that, in the interest of organisational effectiveness and continuous improvement, the AES will, in due course, revisit these guidelines in the near future.

In this context however, and in the light of my address today, I do see room for some improvement in the coverage of the inter-cultural aspects of evaluation practices in the AES document, consistent with the specific principles I have already outlined.

I do recognise that there is always a danger of being overly prescriptive, however, experience has taught me that the inter-cultural issues at play in evaluation are significant and cannot be addressed adequately as part of a more broader approach.

The rights to ownership by appropriate Indigenous community members of their cultural heritage must not be alienated by evaluators/researchers who fail to recognize these rights and to acknowledge their sources.

They do require specific institutional and/or cross-industry exploration and treatment.

Suffice to say that, in any future revision and/or expansion of the AES ethical guidelines, the AES does need to explore some critically important issues. In particular, any review must go to the question of: How well are AES members advised and prepared with respect to their capacity to carry out effective and ethical evaluation practices in inter-cultural settings?

In responding to this issue, my comments in the following sections may be of value.

The primacy of the local inter-cultural context

It needs to be said that effective analysis and understanding of the inter-cultural issues at stake in any evaluation needs to be viewed from a ‘local’ perspective and on a specific project by project basis.

Any broad inter-cultural understandings, however well defined and understood, will nevertheless require testing, clarification, refining and checking as to their legitimacy and relevance at the local level.

In the Indigenous cultural context (certainly in Australia), this is of paramount importance and simply cannot be overlooked. Indigenous ways of learning, knowing, deciding and interacting in relation to the world at large vary greatly from community to community (and this means any practice manual or code of ethics must be flexible and not prescriptive in terms of local representative structures or protocols for the handling of knowledge and confidentiality – it must be organic by definition). Local Indigenous protocols will determine the relationship between the Indigenous stakeholders13 and the evaluators – including who has the cultural and/or institutional legitimacy to speak on behalf of Indigenous stakeholders, clans, community and/or country.

Too many important evaluation projects suffer or run the risk of failing their purpose because the local cultural aspects have not been adequately respected and taken into consideration.

In the Australian contexts, this is becoming critically important. From an inter-cultur
perspective, the need for local Indigenous ownership and accountability of outcomes is of the utmost importance.

**Greater Indigenous Participation:**

Another very significant issue is the level of Indigenous participation and involvement in the evaluation profession itself.

In addition to the inclusive and consultative approaches suggested in the AIATSIS Guidelines already outlined, there is a need to address the level of Indigenous participation in evaluations and in the evaluation profession itself.

Increasing the level of Indigenous participation in evaluation can be addressed through a number of initiatives. Including for example, through institutional arrangements and/or through other collective and/or individual representations and relationships.

In my view, a strengthened, strategic relationship between Indigenous peoples and the evaluation profession would bring about a range of mutual benefits. From an industry perspective, the main benefit would be a markedly enhanced professional capacity to operate more effectively in inter-cultural settings as well as having a larger, more diverse pool of expertise available to support its broader professional activities and responsibilities.

An effective, multi-level relationship between the evaluation profession and the Indigenous community could collaboratively address the issue of recruitment, support and development of more trained Indigenous evaluators (through secondments, sponsorships, traineeships, cadetships, scholarships and the like) in ways which are professionally effective and sustainable. Importantly, such initiatives need to be driven by an industry or profession-wide recognition of, and formal commitment to, the premise that there is significant value in increasing the ranks of professional Indigenous evaluators.

In addition, it needs to be recognised that Indigenous peoples do not come to the evaluation experience either empty-handed or empty-headed. Indigenous cultural knowledge and experience needs to be recognised, respected and given the same currency as other non-Indigenous knowledge. On this point I am not advocating that Indigenous knowledge should replace non-Indigenous or ‘Western’ knowledge but rather that it should be afforded a ‘parity of esteem’ with other knowledge at all times and, that in some situations, it should be given primacy. I believe that Indigenous knowledge now has its own ‘space’ which is neither a primitivist ‘traditionalist’ view nor a largely Western one – but rather has its own identities giving rise to a variety of new and strategic ways to interact with and create more even power relations in a post-colonial world.

Again I reiterate that mutual respect is the key to improved professional relationships. This recognition can be articulated through greater use of Indigenous advisory groups and consultants, through dialogue with both formal and informal Indigenous networks, the development of program/project specific Indigenous reference groups or steering committees, and through the increased engagement of Indigenous peoples in evaluative research as evaluators and/or in liaison/facilitating roles which broker or mediate any inter-cultural tensions or disputes.

**More Inter-culturally Attuned Ethical Mechanisms**

I inferred earlier in this paper that the various inter-cultural aspects of evaluation are not always clearly defined and require some consideration in order to effectively identify, clarify and address such matters. Undoubtedly, ethical issues will arise. If they are not addressed sensitively, and as I have suggested with due diligence, then there is a potential risk that individual evaluation projects could fail. We must not let that happen.

I would like to suggest that it may prove to be of considerable value if the evaluation profession, under the auspices of the AES, could consider the establishment of a peak Indigenous advisory or ethics committee, comprising selected/invited Indigenous experts who would be able to assist the profession with advice and in developing best-practice approaches to evaluative research projects in inter-cultural contexts.

In my view the establishment of a peak Indigenous advisory or ethics committee as a component of the AES governance structure would represent a significant and opportune step in the development of a stronger relationship between the evaluation profession and Indigenous peoples. Over time, such a committee will make a significant contribution to the capacity of the profession and its standing in the wider community. The work of such a committee would also contribute to the profession’s capacity to better understand Indigenous community values and issues and thereby to operate more effectively in inter-cultural settings.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I will restate some of my main points:

- Evaluations and evaluative research do not occur in a cultural or ethical vacuum.

This paper has attempted to offer some principles for ethical, inter-cultural evaluation and research practices. It was my intention to make some suggestions about approaches to best practice in an attempt to ensure that evaluative research with or about Indigenous communities is of high value to
the various stakeholders, including, the Indigenous community, those who commission evaluations and the profession itself.

As a basic tenet, I repeat that approaches to any evaluative research involving Indigenous peoples must be based on respect for Indigenous people's inherent right to self-determination, and our right to control and maintain our culture and heritage. I usually respectful, inclusive, consultative evaluation practices in the before, during and after stages are seen as the preferred model of practice.

Evaluations with and about Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the evaluators and the Indigenous peoples concerned and be underpinned by Indigenous decision-making based on free and fully informed consent. The inter-cultural aspects of evaluation raise important ethical dilemmas that are not always readily identifiable or easily resolved. Inter-cultural issues can be extremely complex and require sensitivity and proper consideration before, during and after the evaluation process.

In advocating the need for proper consideration of the inter-cultural issues through the development of ethical, cultural standards, this paper also highlighted the significance and primacy of Indigenous cultural mores and protocols applying at the local level. I have also advocated fostering and developing more Indigenous researchers/evaluators within the profession, for example through Indigenous/non-Indigenous partnerships and collaborations in evaluation projects.

I have also suggested, as part of building a stronger, more mutually rewarding relationship between the profession and the Indigenous peoples, that the profession, auspiced through the AES, consider establishing a peak Indigenous ethics committee to enhance the profession's capacity to operate more effectively in inter-cultural settings as well as increasing the potential for achieving more valuable collaborative outcomes.

My address today has also attempted to highlight that the evaluation profession itself needs to move beyond rhetoric to reality in practice. The profession needs to realistically evaluate itself in an effort to determine whether or not ethical principles for evaluations in the inter-cultural context are truly being embraced in actual practice. If, as I am suggesting, such a professional self-evaluation shows that more needs to be done in this area, then it is entirely appropriate that the AES itself shows leadership and moves to address this important shortcoming – and I would hope that, through this address, I have provided impetus towards meeting this ethical professional challenge.

My paper today is a call to the evaluation profession to take a more deliberative, proactive professional stance with regard to evaluations in inter-cultural settings. By this I mean to express a view that Indigenous peoples undoubtedly benefit from the activities and outcomes of evaluations. I have stated earlier that I see the role of evaluations and evaluators as one of agents and influencers of change. I am aware of too many governmental and non-governmental programs and projects involving Indigenous peoples which cry out for proper, professional, ethical evaluation (and associated research). If only, in the interest of developing more effective public policy (although by no means the sole issue), I would ask that the evaluation profession, under the auspices of the AES, and through individual firms and practitioners, proactively engineer and highlight its willingness, availability and greater capacity to develop a stronger relationship with the Indigenous community and to increasingly undertake such worthwhile inter-cultural evaluation activities. I feel that, over time, the worthiness of such a professional repositioning strategy would be recognised and the benefits would become self-evident.

Finally, I will address the question: how far can one throw a M ore Boomerang?

The answer to this question, which was often posed by Koori peoples from New South Wales as a component of a tongue-in-cheek, inter-cultural, quasi-IQ test, lies in the fundamental aspect of knowing what actually is a M ore Boomerang.

From an inter-cultural perspective, most New South Wales Koris of all ages know the answer because this is a learned component of their Aboriginal cultural domain – part of their cultural heritage and lifeworld.

To know the answer to this question, indeed to answer many other fundamental questions involving evaluations and judgements, requires knowledge and understanding of an inter-cultural nature – which, of course, is the underlying theme of this paper.

Here is the answer:

A Boomerang is an Australian Aboriginal throwing weapon (used for hunting and in music and ceremony) which is made from various timbers in varying shapes and sizes.

A M ore Boomerang is a member of an Aboriginal Rugby League Team from M ore in New South Wales – a team known as the 'M ore Boomerangs'.
References
2002 (a) Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Canberra.
2002 (b) Paul, M and Gray G (eds) Through a Smoky Mirror. History and Native Title, AIATSIS Native Title Unit, Canberra.

Footnotes
1 Provided courtesy of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and written by John Howard and published through the Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration No. 63 December 1990, pp. 93–99
2 It is recognised that there is significant diversity in the nature of evaluations, including program evaluations (and including those that arise from legislative, other legal and/or official requirements) however in attempting to establish some generic elements of evaluation, this document is particularly useful.
3 The term ‘evaluation’ is said to encompass the systematic collection and analysis of information to make judgements, usually about the effectiveness, efficiency and/or appropriateness of an activity. Source: Australasian Evaluation Society Inc: Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.
4 And in addition, involves analysis, debate and dispute over historical/legal aspects of recent Court decisions concerning very important Native Title claims, their evidence and outcomes. For further reading see AIATSIS 2002(b).
5 In my view, the more negative and harmful aspects of this historical relationship (including death, dispossession, alienation and marginalization, incarceration, impoverishment, ill-health etc) appear to have all been evident to a far greater extent in the Indigenous sharing of these times than has been the case in the experience of our colonising, times-sharing, non-Indigenous partners.
6 Often referred to generically in the Australian context as ‘blackfella/whitefella’ domains.
7 i.e. In the Australian and New Zealand context this of course refers to the non-Indigenous cultural issues, histories, protocols etc
8 Refer AIATSIS 2002(a)
9 For more details of these Principles, including supporting examples and comments, please visit the AIATSIS website at www.aiatsis.gov.au.
11 Note: reference to ‘benefits’ does not mean, and should not be construed as meaning, that any research can only produce ‘good news’ for the Indigenous stakeholders - but rather that the research will produce valuable information and/or positively influence actions or policy responses etc which will ultimately be of benefit to the community e.g. the delivery of better, more effective health services etc.
12 Rights which, of themselves are complex in the Indigenous domain and include concepts such as collective ownership, and interests, are extremely diverse, include knowledge of an oral nature, and may incorporate restrictive rules covering secrecy and sacredness - all of which elements are only broadly and not specifically dealt with in this paper.
13 Which also include the (intra-Indigenous ) sensitive representational issues involving important aspects of ‘mens business’ and ‘womens business’, the recognition and treatment of the secret/sacred materials and relationships and of course, the issue of age and respect for elders.
14 Of course membership of such committees needs to reflect the diversity of interests and expertise available from within the Indigenous community and include consideration of issues such as gender balance and any other specific sectoral expertise and interests (e.g. professional, layperson, church representatives etc) as considered appropriate to the circumstances.
15 I would make the point that the membership of any such proposed Indigenous ethics committee(s) should be respected and remunerated, in the same manner as other non-Indigenous experts are remunerated for their professional advice.
16 An Aboriginal term used to identify Aboriginal peoples from New South Wales.
Attachment 1

AIATSIS PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL RESEARCH IN INDIGINEOUS STUDIES

A. Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding

1. Consultation, negotiation and free and informed consent are the foundations for research with or about Indigenous peoples. Researchers must accept a degree of Indigenous community input into and control of the research process. This also recognises the obligation on researchers give something back to the community. It is ethical practice in any research on Indigenous issues to include consultation with people who may be directly affected by the research or research outcomes whether or not the research involves fieldwork.

2. The responsibility for consultation and negotiation is ongoing. Consultation and negotiation is a continuous two-way process. Ongoing consultation is necessary to ensure free and informed consent for the proposed research, and of maintaining that consent. Research projects should be staged to allow continuing opportunities for consideration of the research by the community.

3. Consultation and negotiation should achieve mutual understanding about the proposed research. Consultation involves an honest exchange of information about aims, methods, and potential outcomes (for all parties). Consultation should not be considered as merely an opportunity for researchers to tell the community what they, the researchers, may want.

Being properly and fully informed about the aims and methods of a research project, its implications and potential outcomes, allows groups to decide for themselves whether to oppose or to embrace the project.

B. Respect, recognition and involvement

4. Indigenous knowledge systems and processes must be respected. Acknowledging and respecting Indigenous knowledge systems and processes is not only a matter of courtesy but also recognition that such knowledge can make a significant contribution to the research process. Researchers must respect the cultural property rights of Indigenous peoples in relation to knowledge, ideas, cultural expressions and cultural materials.

5. There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples as well as of individuals. Research in Indigenous studies must show an appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous peoples, who have different languages, cultures, histories and perspectives. It is also important to recognise the diversity of individuals and groups within those communities.

6. The intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous peoples must be respected and preserved. Indigenous intellectual property is not static and extends to things that may be created based on that heritage.

Indigenous peoples make a significant contribution to research by providing knowledge, resources or access to data. That contribution should be acknowledged through providing access to research results and negotiating rights in the research at an early stage. The community’s expectations, the planned outcomes, and access to research results should be in agreement.

C. Benefits, outcomes and agreement

8. The use of, and access to, research results should be agreed. Indigenous peoples make a significant contribution to research by providing knowledge, resources or access to data. That contribution should be acknowledged through providing access to research results and negotiating rights in the research at an early stage.

The community’s expectations, the planned outcomes, and access to research results should be in agreement.

9. A researched community should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, the research project. Research in Indigenous studies should benefit Indigenous peoples at a local level, and more generally.

A reciprocal benefit should accrue for their allowing researchers often intimate access to their personal and community knowledge.

10. The negotiation of outcomes should include results specific to the needs of the researched community. Among the tangible benefits that a community should be able to expect from a research project is the provision of research results in a form that is useful and accessible.

11. Negotiation should result in a formal agreement for the conduct of a research project, based on good faith and free and informed consent. The aim of the negotiation process is to come to a clear understanding, which results in a formal agreement (preferably written), about research intentions, methods and potential results.

The establishment of agreements and protocols between Indigenous peoples and researchers is an important development in Indigenous studies.

Good faith negotiations are those that have involved a full and frank disclosure of all available information and that were entered into with an honest view to reaching an agreement.

Free and informed consent means that agreement must be obtained free of duress or pressure and fully cognisant of the details, and risks of the proposed research. Informed consent of the people as a group, as well as individuals within that group, is important.
Evaluation standards and their application to Indigenous programs in Victoria, Australia

The historical and current status of Indigenous people needs careful consideration in designing evaluations of Indigenous-specific programs. In Australia, the evaluator operates in a context arising from past policies of discrimination against Indigenous people and limited current policy moves toward community control and self-determination. Evaluation guidelines and standards exist to provide direction and become particularly valuable in complex project conditions, such as the current evaluation. This paper reflects on guidelines of the Australasian Evaluation Society and standards of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) as they apply to the evaluation of Indigenous programs in Victoria, focusing on our recent experience in the evaluation of Indigenous specific alcohol and drug programs. Particular attention is given to the utility standards of the AEA, given the range of key stakeholders involved in the evaluation. We discuss the consistency of our approach with the utility standards and suggest areas where modification to the standards may be useful, drawing particularly on the modifications to the standards that have been put forward by the African Evaluation Association. In reflecting on the evaluation, we also identify areas for change in future projects involving Indigenous programs.

Evaluation guidelines and standards

Guidelines of the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) comprise evaluation principles and guidelines for their application. Three areas are involved: commissioning and preparing for an evaluation; conducting an evaluation, and reporting the evaluation results (AES, 1998). The AES recognises that the guidelines must have the capacity to deal with familiar and new issues, with due cognisance that they are subject to change as the need arises.

These guidelines are complemented by guides and standards developed by other professional groups around the world, including the American Evaluation...
How adequate are these guidelines and standards in relation to the evaluation of Indigenous programs in Victoria? While the AES guidelines do not specifically address Indigenous groups from Australia or New Zealand, it is noted that ‘account should be taken of the potential effects of differences and inequalities in society related to race ... in the design, conduct and reporting of evaluations. Particular regard should be given to any rights, protocols, treaties or legal guidelines which apply’ (AES, 1998, p. 4). Similarly, principles of the American Evaluation Association (AEA Taskforce, 1994) include the evaluator’s responsibility to identify and respect participant differences, ranging from culture and religion to age and sexual orientation. Recent efforts by the AEA to address complexities faced by evaluators working across cultures and in diverse communities have identified the relevance of general evaluation standards to these settings, and the need for more specific standards regarding cultural competence (Thomas, 2002).

Having recently conducted an evaluation of Indigenous alcohol and drug programs in Victoria, we were interested in exploring the consistency of our approach with the AEA standards and areas where modifications to the standards may have been helpful. First, a brief description of the evaluation is provided.

The evaluation of Indigenous (Koori) alcohol and drug services

Koori alcohol and drug programs were nominated for evaluation as part of the Victorian Drugs Policy and Services Branch, Department of Human Services’ (DHS) ongoing commitment to program monitoring and development. Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, a non-government clinical, research, and training organisation, was commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the programs. The evaluation was process oriented, designed to assist in the implementation and refinement of program design and procedure by describing the process of program delivery and the barriers involved (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985).

Twenty programs were involved: thirteen Koori community alcohol and drug worker programs, that provide a mixture of prevention and treatment, and seven Koori community alcohol and drug resource programs, commonly known as ‘sobering-up shelters’. These programs provide short-term accommodation and support for alcohol and drug-affected individuals, as an alternative to police custody. The majority of programs were located at community-controlled organisations, which provide a range of health and other programs. The evaluation commenced in September 2000 and was completed in October 2001.

Initially, the DHS wrote to program staff to inform them of the evaluation, utilising standard terms of reference for process evaluations of alcohol and drug programs. These terms of reference were:

1. To identify the service models in operation and determine the extent to which they operate within general and specific key service requirements of the programs.
2. To determine the extent to which services have met the performance measures and targets shown in their 99/00 Funding and Service Agreement with DHS.
3. To identify innovative practices as well as areas where limitations exist.
4. To identify larger (systemic) issues that impact on service delivery.

The DHS also established a steering committee for the project that included representatives from: peak Koori organisations; Koori and other units of the DHS; regional alcohol and drug program co-ordinators, and the evaluators. The first meeting of this committee focussed on the terms of reference and areas for investigation.

A Koori alcohol and drug program co-ordinator operates from the central office of the DHS and meets regularly with program staff for peer support and professional development activities. The evaluation was discussed at a meeting of this group and participants’ generated a list of process and content issues for the project (eg, a preference for qualitative data collection approaches, staffing concerns). Our first task as evaluators was to merge the original terms of reference with suggestions of program staff to ensure a relevant and useful focus for the project.

We commenced an extensive consultation phase involving program staff and the DHS. We met with program workers, discussed the terms of reference and heard about their concerns and views on important areas for the evaluation. An agreement was reached regarding the need for a further meeting with workers. In the interim, we undertook conceptual analysis of the information received from the workers and identified their priorities for the evaluation. We met with the DHS to discuss these priorities and arrive at an agreed focus for the evaluation. We subsequently developed draft terms of reference and evaluation questions that were based on these consultations. Meetings were then held with program workers and with the steering committee, to ensure that both groups agreed upon the terms of reference and evaluation questions. The final terms of reference were:

1. To document the service models in operation.
2. To identify similarities and differences between DHS expectations of services and service delivery, and understand the reasons for differences.
3. To identify larger (systemic) issues that impact on service delivery.
There were twelve evaluation questions:

1. What are the strengths of the services and their workers?
2. What are the differences between working in a Koori alcohol and drug position and an alcohol and drug position in a mainstream organisation?
3. What is the nature of the client group?
4. How does treatment involve?
5. How do services work with other agencies?
6. What services are provided to family/community members?
7. How are prevention/education approaches a part of the Koori Community Alcohol and Drug Worker program?
8. How closely do the expectations of the Department of Human Services and the work undertaken by services match? What are the reasons for differences?
9. What supports are in place for staff supervision and debriefing?
10. What training has been undertaken and what training needs require attention?
11. What are the barriers to service delivery?
12. What is needed to further improve the services provided?

Although program staff originally had some concerns regarding appropriate evaluation methods, there was strong consistency between their expectations and the methods we proposed. We advocated a strong focus on face-to-face contact and qualitative approaches, as these methods have a descriptive focus, rather than pre-imposed structure, and they may be easily adapted to include consideration of the context surrounding programs (Hunter, 1991; Saggars & Gray, 1998). In brief, the method included site visits of one to three days at each location, to observe the program and talk with management, staff, clients, and other key stakeholders. Face-to-face interviews were held with key stakeholders who had been recommended by program staff and management, a literature review was conducted, and program documents and monitoring data were analysed. Additional key stakeholder interviews were held with representatives from peak Koori organisations and government policy areas. A total of 221 interviews was held, involving the following stakeholders:

- 109 Koori co-operatives and mainstream auspice agencies, including board members, elders, clients, and management staff
- 75 other treatment and support organisations including other alcohol and drug services, police, welfare agencies, and the Koori community
- 37 organisations that influence policy development including Koori and Government Board members, community elders, clients, management and program staff were involved. Interviews with staff from other organisations included non-Koori specific alcohol and drug programs, the police, and welfare agencies. Koori community members working in a voluntary capacity were also interviewed at some locations. Policy advisors from a range of Koori and mainstream peak body groups, such as the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, and the Koori Health Unit of the DHS, were also consulted.

Strategies to support our competence as evaluators for the project included an extensive review of policy and research literature as well as the establishment of an informal arrangement with noted leaders in the Koori community. One person was particularly instrumental in supporting the project. The community leaders’ contribution worked in two ways. First, they provided advice in relation to process issues and, second, they acted as guardians or custodians to the process – supporting the project through informal communication channels that operate in the community. Our experience was similar to that described by Pearson (1993, p. xli), who explains that the key stakeholder operates as “‘sponsor” and “gatekeeper’ to the world of others”, facilitating access to the community (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and acting as a ‘guide to and translator of cultural mores’ (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 367).

Following data collection and analysis, a second round of site visits was held where we provided a verbal summary of findings, accompanied by a plain language written report (for each location). The community co-operatives nominated who would be involved in this part of the process, at some locations it was program staff and at others board members also took part. We encouraged feedback at the meeting or in the few weeks afterward and the reports were subsequently finalised and forwarded to the programs. An overview report, on general trends and systemic issues was also prepared. We organised a meeting, involving co-operative staff and DHS representatives, to review draft recommendations for the report. The report was then sent out to the co-operatives for further review and subsequently finalised.

Utility standards of the AEA

One area of concern was whether the evaluation would be useful for all program stakeholders and the utility standards of the AEA provide guidance in this area. These standards involve seven items that ‘are intended to ensure that an evaluation will service the information needs of intended users’ (AEA, undated, p. 1). Next we discuss the
application of each standard with our experience in conducting the evaluation.

1. Stakeholder identification
Persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

The Koori alcohol and drug programs are (for the most part) located at Koori community co-operatives, which are designed to represent Koori interests and provide programs that are suited to their needs. In this context, utility standard one needs to be understood as encapsulating community representatives at each program location – usually the elected board members of the co-operative.

The African Evaluation Association (AfrEA, 2002) noted the importance of recognising program beneficiaries as part of utility standard one, as this group is often not represented at organisational level. Key stakeholder ownership of the evaluation was also considered important. The AfrEA version of utility standard one comprised the following:

Persons and organisations involved in or affected by the evaluation (with special attention to beneficiaries at community level) should be identified and included in the evaluation process, so that their needs can be addressed and so that the evaluation findings are utilizable and owned by stakeholders, to the extent that this is useful, feasible and allowed. (AfrEA, authors' emphasis, p. 5)

These examples illustrate the importance of maintaining an open stance regarding who the relevant key stakeholder groups are; as an evaluator taking due consideration of structural arrangements for the programs. It is important not to bring too strong an expectation to the evaluation endeavour that may exclude groups that are very important within the day-to-day operations of the program. The utility standard has scope for all relevant stakeholders to be considered, however it is important the evaluator is aware of the possible influence of preconceived ideas on key groups and that the evaluation study has sufficient flexibility to accommodate changes to incorporate groups identified at local level.

2. Evaluator credibility
The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

We addressed our competence as evaluators by becoming familiar with the context of program operations through the study of policy documents and literature. Gray, et al (1995) emphasise that Indigenous people should have the opportunity to participate in evaluations of Indigenous programs. It was not practical for us to involve Indigenous people as evaluators, however a key outcome of early efforts to negotiate revised terms of reference was the development of a trusting relationship between program staff and ourselves. Once our trustworthiness had been established, Koori staff took on a somewhat collaborative approach – working with us during the site visits and providing guidance and information that facilitated our understanding of cultural influences on program operations. Further advantage may have been obtained through having Indigenous people as part of the evaluation team, issues of trust and understandings of cultural influences may not have been as challenging in such circumstances. This utility standard may require modification to include the consideration of having Indigenous people on the evaluation team and/or supporting collaborative approaches for evaluations on Indigenous programs.

3. Information scope and selection
Information collected should be broadly selected to address pertinent questions about the program and be responsive to the needs and interests of clients and other specified stakeholders.

As described previously, a mixed methods approach was used for the evaluation. While most methods were agreeable to all stakeholders, government emphasised the use of service monitoring data from the Alcohol and Drug Information System (ADIS) to inform the evaluation and program staff were nervous about the interpretation of these data. This nervousness resulted from their perspective that the data collection system did not have scope to capture the range of activities involved in program delivery. In addition, resource and skill development issues had impacted on the capacity for accurate data collection at a number of program locations. The ADIS data were summarised and this summary was discussed with program staff during the site visits for the evaluation. This was important, as it provided an opportunity to identify data anomalies resulting from poor recording rather than program inadequacy.

4. Values identification
The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgements are clear.

The AfrEA (2002) discussions on this standard centred on the fact that more than one value system may be in operation. The AfrEA suggest that the standard should be extended, with the addition of the following statement:

The possibility of allowing multiple interpretations of findings should be transparently preserved, provided that these interpretations respond to...
stakeholders’ concerns and needs for utilization purposes. (p. 6).

This amendment has resonance with our experience in conducting the Koori evaluation, and has some consistency with existing views on the complexity of Indigenous program delivery in Australia.

Gray, et al., (1995) note the varying perspectives regarding program focus and accountability that may exist between government funding bodies and community-controlled Indigenous organizations, that are based in different value orientations. While the Indigenous organisation may not agree with the operating conditions attached to program funding that are put forward by government, they are left with little choice but to take the funding and agree to the conditions while implementing a program that is more closely aligned to local community needs. While the programs in this evaluation were funded as alcohol and drug specific interventions, the co-operatives often regarded the alcohol and drug program role as being more holistic; dealing with a range of client needs. This posed a challenge for the evaluation in adequately representing government and program perspectives on what was, or should be, being provided. We agree with the modification to the utility standard put forward by the AfrEA (2002) and suggest it may have particular application in multicultural settings, including those where Indigenous cultures exist alongside non-Indigenous cultures.

5. Report clarity

Evaluation reports should clearly describe the program being evaluated, including its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

It was important to take note of the context of program operations, a factor that is emphasised for research involving Indigenous people (e.g., Hunter, 1991). The site visits were essential. As with all evaluation efforts, we strived to produce reports that were clear and transparent. The evaluation used oral presentations and discussion in relation to the draft reports and overview, which brought the evaluation findings to the attention of program workers and other staff at the co-operatives. This did not occur in relation to the final overview report for the evaluation. Our experience suggests oral presentations are important and that the target audience extends beyond the program workers and management in the Indigenous context.

6. Report timeliness and dissemination

Significant interim findings and evaluation reports should be disseminated to intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

As with all projects, the evaluation operated within specific resource and time constraints. Embedded into the method was a considerable period for consultation at the commencement of the project and regarding the presentation of interim findings. In recognition of the complexity of the evaluation, government was quite flexible regarding the project timelines. Timeliness was regarded as secondary to due process, consistent with the tenet of the AfrEA guidelines, who suggest that “the “way in which a thing is done” is often considered more important than getting it done “on time and within the budget” (2002, p. 6). This seems a sensible approach, although pragmatically it may pose problems for both the evaluators and funding body as timelines are extended and resources are exhausted. This is a difficult area to address and somewhat tangential to utility standard number six, which focuses more on the dissemination process. Our experience suggests the need for commentary addressing the point regarding the balance between timeliness and due process.

7. Evaluation impact

Evaluations should be planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage follow-through by stakeholders, so that the likelihood that the evaluation will be used is increased.

In our experience, the report format was useful for government but not attractive to program staff or board members. While the reports were presented in plain language and organised around key questions for the project, a more animated or interactive form of presentation may have impacted more (on program staff and other members of the co-operative and community). Other methods of presentation for consideration include a poster display at the co-operative and a presentation of findings at community meetings. While the existing standard is broad enough to cover this approach, it may be beneficial to stipulate the need to tailor modes of presentation to the evaluation audience, with particular reference to minority groups and Indigenous communities. Supporting commentary may clarify these needs in relation to the standard.

Discussion

The utility standards of the AEA (AEA, undated) were certainly relevant to the evaluation of Koori alcohol and drug programs. In some instances, detail

Finally, this analysis of the consistency between the AEA (undated) standards and the Koori evaluation suggests that, whereas the AES has rightly endorsed these standards for evaluation in the Australian context, extra attention to detail is needed when evaluations target Indigenous programs.

on particular issues was required – for example in emphasising the range of key stakeholders involved, the need for flexibility in relation to timelines, and alternative ways of presenting evaluation findings.

The modifications to the standards that have been put forward by the AfrEA (2002) are an
important resource as the association strives to consider such things as the complexity of circumstances (e.g., where stakeholders are not readily accessible) and the multiple value sets that may impact on the interpretation of findings. Their work is a useful reminder of the need for guides that inform evaluators working in multicultural settings.

The resource implications of tailoring standards (and methods) to the evaluation of Indigenous programs may be considerable, as additional time is needed to allow for consultation and appropriate data collection approaches, in addition to the inclusion of efficient methods for dissemination of the findings. A sound understanding of these implications would support effective evaluations that benefit all involved.

Finally, this analysis of the consistency between the AEA (undated) standards and the Koori evaluation suggests that, whereas the AES has rightly endorsed these standards for evaluation in the Australian context, extra attention to detail is needed when evaluations target Indigenous programs. Current efforts of the AEA (Thomas, 2002) together with perspectives from other countries can inform the development of material to supplement the standards, possibly incorporating guidelines for the evaluation of Indigenous programs.

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References


REVIEW

Title: Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods (3rd ed.)
Author: Patton, M.Q.
Publisher: Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA
Publication date: 2002
Extent/type: 598 pages, hbk
Price: $127.00
ISBN: 0761919716

reviewed by: Colin A. Sharp

The followers of Patton need not feel they have been short-changed in the newer editions, as the same old favourite quotes are still there, e.g.

‘In Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 1978) I suggested that if one had to choose between implementation information and outcomes information because of limited evaluation resources, there are many instances in which implementation information would be of greater value. A decision maker can use implementation information to make sure that a policy is being put into operation according to design – or to test the feasibility of the policy. Unless one knows that a program is operating according to design, there may be little reason to expect it to produce the desired outcomes. Furthermore, until the program is implemented and a ‘treatment’ is believed to be in operation, there may be little reason even to bother evaluating outcomes. Where outcomes are evaluated without knowledge of implementation, the results seldom provide a direction for action because the decision maker lacks information about what produced the observed outcomes (or lack of outcomes).

... It is important to study and evaluate program implementation in order to understand how and why programs deviate from initial plans and expectations. Such deviations are quite common and natural ...’ (Patton, 1980, p 69; 1990, p. 105; Patton, 2002, p. 161)

As a quantitative indicator of the value for money, the benchmarking of the same context by page numbers shows the expansion of the substance in Patton’s work, as with the ‘big bang’ theory his universe of wisdom keeps expanding exponentially. A qualitative indicator might be that Halcom’s (Malcolm Gray & Hal Lenke) sayings and riddles have not only multiplied, but transcended into a scattering of insightful cartoons, which were largely absent in the earlier editions.

However, one aspect which in his work attests the evolution and expansion of the qualitative methodologies is in the deleting of the ‘paradigm of choices’ title and of the first edition. Along with that went the ‘concern about methodological prejudice’ and the ‘lament about the dominance of one paradigm over the other.’ (Patton, 1980, p. 18). This is a pity because this let lapse the charming analogy Patton shared with his workshop audience at the Brisbane AES Conference 1989, where he read passages from Dr Seuss’s (1961) The Sneetches. Aparently, like the Sneetches’ unproductive competition between those with ‘stars upon thars’ and those ‘plain belly Sneetches’, it no longer matters whether a researcher is from the ‘dominant’ paradigm or not: ‘Sneetches are Sneetches and no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches’ (Dr Suess, 1961, p. 24).

Similarly the rapproachment of the methods paradigms has obviated Patton’s (1990, p. 493) ending of the 2nd edition with ‘A look to the future’ where the field of evaluation research is richer for these options and these debates.

Like the application of naturalistic inquiry to data collection the increasing exposure of the approach in the field of evaluation seems to have been reactive the the leaders’ (including Patton) prosletising, so there has been a contagion effect (band wagon effect?) as qualitative methods have become more acceptable for Doctoral dissertations, and so expanding the literature accordingly, as Patton himself recognises.

But like the case of Austin & Peters In Search of Excellence cited as an example, there is a danger in believing that qualitative methods such as case study are suffi cient. They may be necessary for depth of understanding, but ‘lessons learned’ are not a suffi cient basis for recommending change or validating predictive hypothese or generalising to different prospective cases. Patton is obviously on to this issue in big way and one of the better
How can one evaluate such a catalytic process as his books when the sea change is still surging. In an earlier review of Herman’s Program Evaluation Kit (Sharp, 1991), I proposed that any publication of this kind should meet seven criteria:

- **be comprehensive and eclectic** (there is no doubt that the 3rd edition is even more than the earlier editions);
- **offer a heuristic system** (the sayings riddles and cartoons, embellish upon a substantive system for promoting learning about qualitative evaluation);
- **provide a valid framework** grounded in the mainstream of accepted professional practice of evaluation (yes, now it is probably because of the influence of the previous books and workshops of the author);
- **provide case examples from a variety of fields** (there are a rich range of examples);
- **be ‘user-friendly’** (although his books have useful contents, and indexes, there were occasional difficulties actually finding the key words on the pages identified by the index);
- **be technically competent** (there is no doubt that Michael Quinn Patton conveys that competence in his work which is backed up by sound advice and appropriate explanatory and cautionary information about the methods and approaches presented); and
- **provide an adequate explanation** of data collection and analysis for the uninitiated (indeed it does).

Overall strengths and weaknesses

The main strength of this publication is its comprehensiveness and its accessibility at multiple levels of insight. Its weakness is that it may be too big and comprehensive and it may be difficult to find the specifics to follow up one’s specific questions. Overall, I enjoyed this book even after the two previous editions are worn with admiration. For that it is to be applauded, and it is good value.

References

Yolande Wadsworth is well known for her ability to turn complex research ideas into practical ideas that can be readily adopted by community based researchers and practitioners. Her Do-it-Yourself Social Research was a classic of the 1980s. Everyday Evaluation on the Run is another publication in the same genre. Wadsworth sets out to contribute 'towards building a broader culture of evaluation throughout human systems' and certainly does this through this no nonsense, clearly written and easy to follow text.

The book is very well-illustrated with amusing cartoons that contribute to the demystification of research. The first edition was published in 1991 and since then I have been recommending the book as essential reading for those wanting to know more about human service evaluation.

The table of contents begins with the following: 'Warning!! This book contains some unfamiliar and theoretical ideas that may sometimes seem like hard work. Perseverance will be rewarded!'. Despite most people's initial reluctance to engage with evaluation, Wadsworth points out that, in fact, the process of evaluation is not unfamiliar. Most of us do all the time in our daily lives. Whenever we take new actions, make decisions, do things slightly differently, or get creative, we are evaluating past practices. On the basis of this we adapt what we are doing or stay with the same idea reassured that it makes sense. The practical orientation of Wadsworth's book is shown by the way she uses the exercise of the evaluation of a tea or coffee mug as an example of everyday evaluation.

Wadsworth recommends the use of the action evaluation research process for human services. This process consists of a cycle of reflection on current actions, design, fieldwork, analysis and conclusion, feedback, planning and back into reflection. A clear exposition of this process is provided in a wall chart at the back of the book. After describing this cycle Wadsworth provides a very useful section on signs of a good evaluation. These are listed as one in which the evaluation did not get out of touch with the situation, that did justice to everyone’s views and ideas, enabled those involved to learn things and break new ground, is perceived as useful, and takes sufficient time.

A particularly novel aspect of the approach she advocates is the establishment of a Critical Reference Group. This group is designed to have the capacity ‘to identify the interest of those who are meant to be served by the services or actions being planned, provided, evaluated or otherwise researched’ (p. 17). Her discussion of the use of this group contains many valuable lessons for researchers who are keen to put into practice the rhetoric of community participation in research.

Chapter three contains details of two approaches to evaluation – Open Inquiry and Audit Review – that are both very practical for human services. Chapter four highlights the importance of developing a culture of evaluation in an organisation. It suggests that evaluation can happen on a daily, individual basis, weekly, monthly, annual basis and through comprehensive program ‘stocktakes’. The overall message is that, reflection and planned change are the hallmarks of good practice. The final chapter contains a guide to tools and approaches used in evaluation. This is a very handy reference section and clarifies much of the jargon that plagues evaluation.

One minor quibble – an index to the whole book would be very helpful and should be included in any third edition.

In sum, the second edition of Everyday Evaluation on the Run is an essential tool for experienced evaluators who will find it a useful reference tool (especially Chapter five) and a great guide to more participatory forms of evaluation. It also provides an invaluable tool for human service practitioners who are obliged to conduct or manage evaluation as part of their role but feel somewhat reluctant about it. This book makes evaluation seem manageable, achievable and, most important of all, an essential part of good practice. Congratulations to Yolande Wadsworth for once again providing us with a book packed with complex ideas, based on sound social science theory packaged in a way that is accessible to a broad audience.
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