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**Australian government health program evaluations: Who are the evaluators?**

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Program evaluation is an emerging discipline that expanded rapidly towards the end of the twenty-first century, primarily in response to increased expansion of government activities and calls for accountability in the expenditure of government funds through audit and performance measurement – the foundations of program evaluation. Understanding these foundations is important in understand the theoretical influences that have shaped the past and continue to drive the future of program evaluation. Program evaluation is not a discrete discipline and borrows much from the backgrounds and affiliations of its practitioners. Evaluators each bring their unique experience to an evaluation, drawn from their backgrounds, professional affiliations, theoretical influences and content expertise. To understand current practices in Australian program evaluation, it is necessary to identify successful evaluators and their characteristics. This paper will report on the findings of a content analysis of the evaluations commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing over the last five years. This analysis is based on consultancies published in Annual Reports between 2000 and 2005. The focus of the analysis will be on categories of successful consultancies, as published data does not include the details of individual consultants. The results of this content analysis will be discussed in light of international research on the evaluation profession, including implications for the future.