

# Enough room for everyone: collaboration of internal and external evaluators

***Presenter: Kim Hider  
Manager, Evaluation Service  
Southern Health, Victoria, Australia***



integrity • compassion • accountability • respect • excellence

*Southern Health*

Better Health for Our Community

# Location of Southern Health

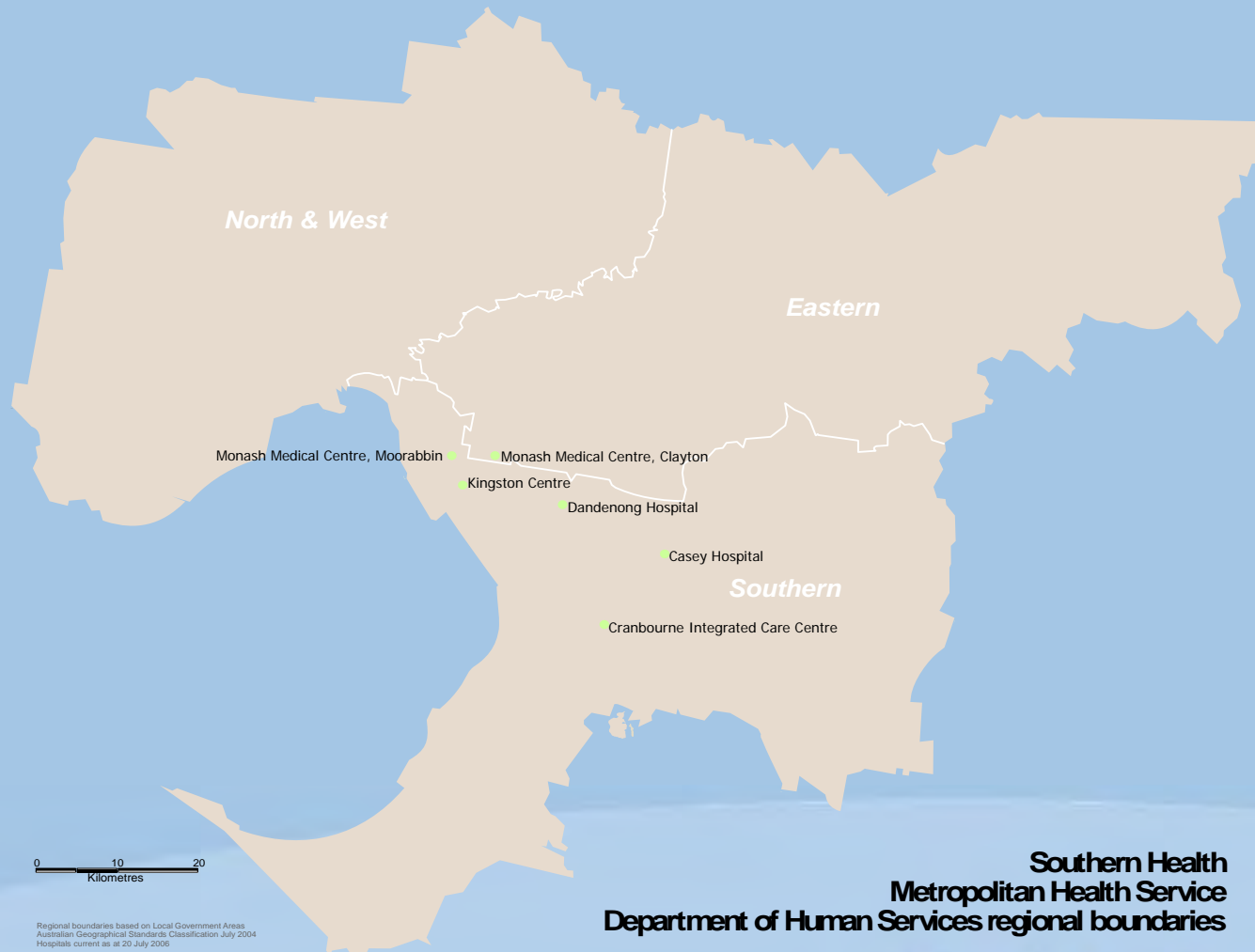


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# Southern Health hospital sites



# Southern Health overview

## Victoria's largest health service

- Integrated health service (>40 sites)
  - 6 major hospitals
  - Subacute/rehabilitation/aged care services
  - Mental health services
  - Community health services
- Services a core community of >888,000 people
- Employs over 12,700 staff

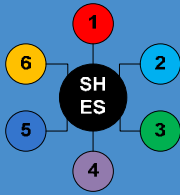


# Centre for Clinical Effectiveness (CCE)

- Established at Southern Health in 1998
- An evidence-based practice support unit
- Supports health service personnel to access and use the best available evidence in clinical practice
- Conducts systematic reviews
- Develop evidence-based clinical practice guidelines



# Southern Health Evaluation Service



- Appointment of an internal senior evaluation consultant in July 2009
- Southern Health Evaluation Service established within the Centre for Clinical Effectiveness
- Support staff to plan, participate in and conduct comprehensive and rigorous evaluations

# Goal of the Evaluation Service

***To build an evaluation culture  
across Southern Health and  
support evidence-based  
decision making***



# Literature search

- National and International search for other evaluation services/units operating within health services
- Limited examples evident in the health sector
- Some examples from other settings  
(eg: education, primary industry, often at departmental levels)
- No evidence of effectiveness of the different models

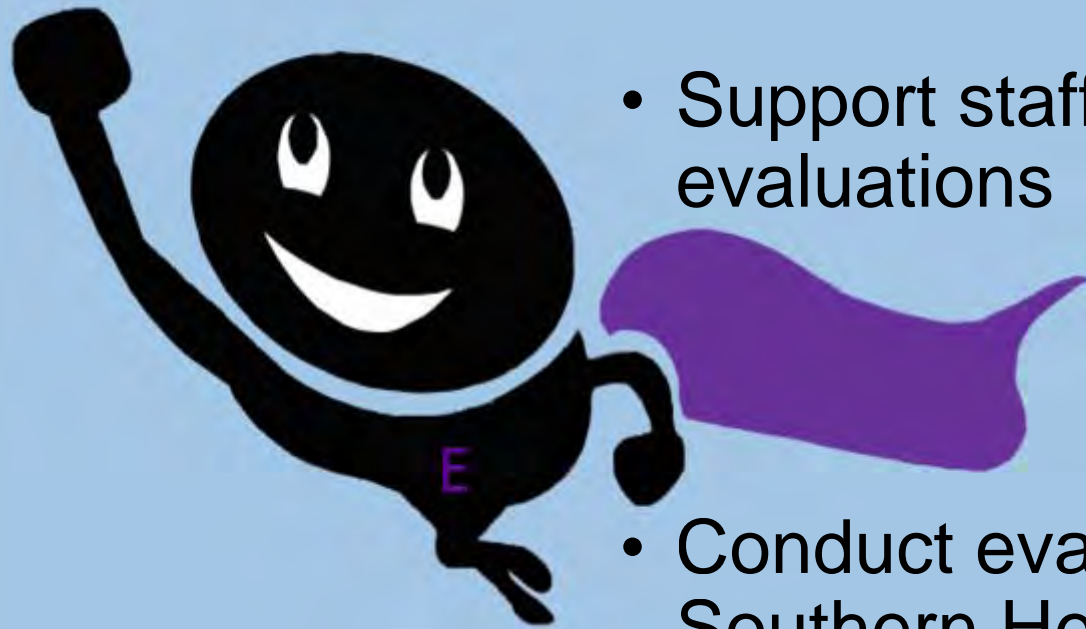


# Evaluation Service model



# Southern Health evaluator (SHE)

- Super Eva



- Provide advice to staff on evaluation approaches and methods
- Support staff plan and conduct evaluations
- Conduct evaluations across Southern Health
- Provide advice to staff on engaging evaluators

# More internal evaluator tasks ....

- Establish an evaluation consultancy register
- Develop an online evaluation resource directory
- Develop evaluation tools, templates and staff information sheets
- Develop evaluation education modules for staff
- Provide onsite evaluation training to staff

# And the list goes on....

- Explore staff interest in online evaluation interest groups
- Conduct a Southern Health evaluation activity audit
- Establish an evaluation database
- Evaluate the Southern Health Evaluation Service
- Write articles for journal publications and present at conferences



# Strategies to manage scope and demand

- A tiered activity structure based on level of infrastructure support available (Level 1 & 2 activities)

Eg: Provide guidelines for staff on engaging evaluation consultants (level 1)  
Support staff with the management of evaluation tenders (level 2)

- Priority domains for the Evaluation Service

## Southern Health Evaluation Service - Priority Domains

<b>The Southern Health Annual Statement of Priorities (SOP)</b>	<b>Southern Health Enterprise Risk Management Framework</b>  (Extreme and high risk areas)	<b>Accreditation EQUIP 4 Criteria</b>  Australian Council on Healthcare Standards - survey recommendations	<b>Southern Health Strategic Priorities</b>  Endorsed by the Executive Management Team
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# Strategies to manage scope and demand

- Targeting of key staff groups based on degree of potential influence to build evaluation capacity
  - ❑ **Evaluation drivers and decision-makers** (eg: Executive Directors, Allied Health General Managers, Medical Directors, Directors of Nursing, Clinical Support Unit Directors)
  - ❑ **Strategic evaluation partners** (eg: Department Heads, Nurse Unit Managers)
  - ❑ **Evaluation advocates and advisors** (eg: Quality Unit staff, Quality co-ordinators, medical, nursing and allied health staff educators)
- Engagement and collaboration with external evaluators

# External evaluator roles at Southern Health

- Recruitment of the internal evaluation consultant
- Evaluation consultancy roles on projects and service development initiatives
- Evaluation training to staff
- Mentoring staff
- Conducting evaluations



# The value of collaboration

- Gain the advantages of both

Internal evaluators	External evaluators
Knowledge of programs and operations	Perceived objectivity
Availability	Specialist skills and expertise
Knowledge of context	Willingness to criticise
Cost	
Utilisation of findings	



# The value of collaboration .....

- Influences the application of evaluation practice across Southern Health
  - ❑ Changes to frequency and timing of evaluations
- Raises the awareness and the importance of evaluation
  - ❑ Increases interest and support at Senior Management level
- Provides best 'value for money' choices
  - ❑ Small scale evaluations (in-house), larger evaluations access external evaluators

# The value of collaboration .....

- Enables peer support and recognition amongst evaluators
  - ❑ Cohesion within the evaluation profession
- Supports evaluation knowledge transfer
  - ❑ Increasing health service staff interest in developing evaluation skills
  - ❑ Provides opportunities to put evaluation theories into practice

# Things to consider when sharing the turf

- Clarify roles and responsibilities within evaluation activities
- Respect existing relationships between evaluators and staff
- Maintain good communication between evaluators
- Ensure mutual trust and respect amongst peers

# Sharing the turf .....

- Acknowledge the skills and expertise of each evaluator
- Identify who best suits the tasks, and divide work up accordingly
- Search for funding to support comprehensive evaluations in the organisation

# Possible disadvantages

- Potential conflicts of interest
- Inconsistent information and advice
- Competitive not collaborative
- Different consulting styles and expectations



# Early achievements

- Increasing interest in building evaluation planning early into new initiatives across Southern Health
  - ❑ Program logic models, evaluation frameworks and evaluation plans developed for large organisational projects

## Examples:

- Evidence-based Policy and Procedure Framework
- Target-best Care (using LEAN methodology approach)
- Medication Safety Strategy
- Public-funded Homebirth Service (Casey Hospital)



# Early achievements .....

- Southern Health Evaluation Service INTRANET site
- Evaluation Training & Education Calendar
- Evaluation incorporated into the Southern Health Strategic Plan (2010-2013)

*“Ensure that we evaluate the effectiveness of our services and facilities and plan for the future based on evidence and best practice”*



# Conclusion

Like the use of mixed-method approaches, internal and external evaluator collaborations bring together ‘the best of both worlds’.

*“Ultimately the ‘Great House’ of evaluation should have room for both internal and external evaluators if it wishes to continue to grow.”*

(Melissa Conley-Tyler, 2005)





# Acknowledgements

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- Darren Harris

