Being The Best We Can
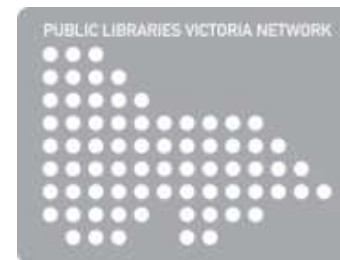
Empowerment Evaluation for Public Libraries

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State Library of Victoria

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Origins

State Library of Victoria

PUBLIC LIBRARIES VICTORIA NETWORK

acig australian continuous improvement group

Scottish Library & Information Council

Objectives

- Provide tool to help libraries evaluate service quality & impact, & inform action plans
- Consolidate previous evaluation work:
  - *Libraries Building Communities* research
  - Collections audit
  - Buildings audit
  - Local history collection assessments

Three basic questions

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Being The Best We Can

- Self-evaluation
- Research-informed framework
- Staff involvement
- Evidence based
- Peer review moderated

Empowerment principles & BTBWC

- Improvement
- Inclusion
- Evidence-based strategies
- Capacity building
- Organisational learning
- Accountability

Fetterman & Wandersman (eds), 2005, *Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice*, The Guildford Press, NY
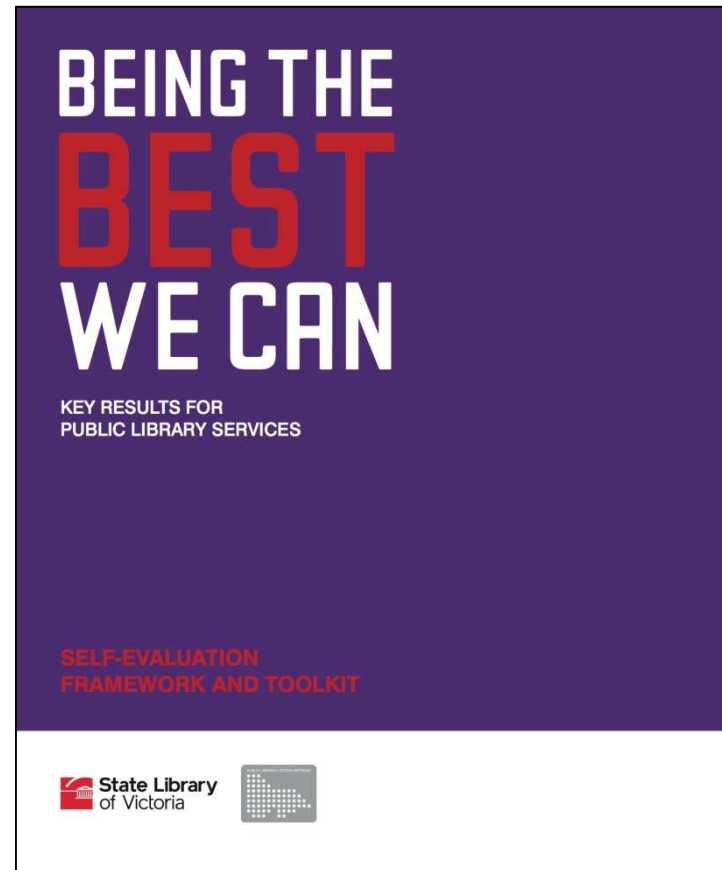
BTBWC project

- Develop framework & evaluation process
- Pilot
- Review & modify
- Extended pilot
- Review & modify
- Rollout

Pilot libraries
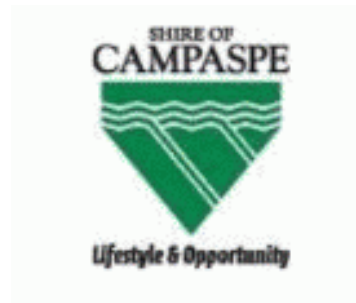
Framework

- Provides criteria for evaluation
  - 5 key result areas
  - 3 themes for each key result area
- Toolkit provides process & organises evidence

BEING THE **BEST** WE CAN

KEY RESULTS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND TOOLKIT

State Library of Victoria

Providing gateways to information, learning & leisure

1.1 Sufficiency, range & suitability of resources

1.2 Arrangements for access

1.3 Staff knowledge of information tools & user support

Building individual skills, capability & wellbeing

2.1 Lifelong learning in the library context

2.2 Providing & promoting 21st century literacies

2.3 Encouraging a reading culture

Developing social capital

3.1 Welcoming civic space & sense of belonging

3.2 Supporting social connections & reaching out to communities
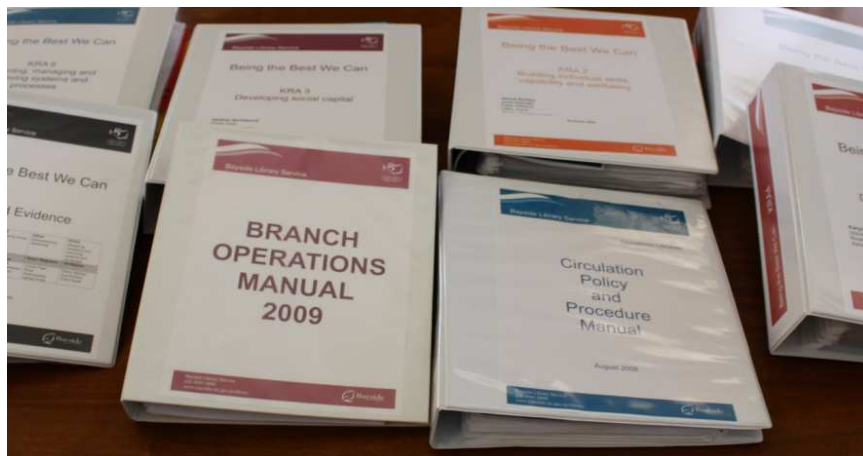
3.3 Working in partnerships

Demonstrating leadership

4.1 Leadership & innovation at all levels

4.2 Planning & community engagement

4.3 Building organisational capability through people

Designing, managing & improving systems & processes

5.1 Implementation of policies & procedures

5.2 Obtaining & using resources

5.3 Evaluation & continuous improvement

Self-evaluation steps

- Decide scope
- Orientation
- Workshop – preliminary evaluation
- Refine evaluation, gather evidence
- Draft report
- Peer review
- Final report
- Follow-up presentations
- Implement improvements

Workshop

Star ratings

★★★★★ Sector leading, world class

★★★★ Major strengths

★★★ Important strengths, some gaps

★★ Satisfactory core service, weaknesses impact users

★ Limited core services, significant user impact

Peer review

Outputs

- Documented assessment of services
- Improvement plan
- Report to stakeholders

Uses

- External
- Tell the library's story
  - to the community
  - to the Board
  - to Council

- Internal
- Engage staff
- Plan
  - service development
  - new services
  - priorities

Benefits

Libraries

- Takes stock of performance
- Measures progress towards objectives
- Identifies key strengths
- Identifies areas for improvement
- Helps set action priorities

Staff

- Increases service understanding
- Increases feeling of ownership
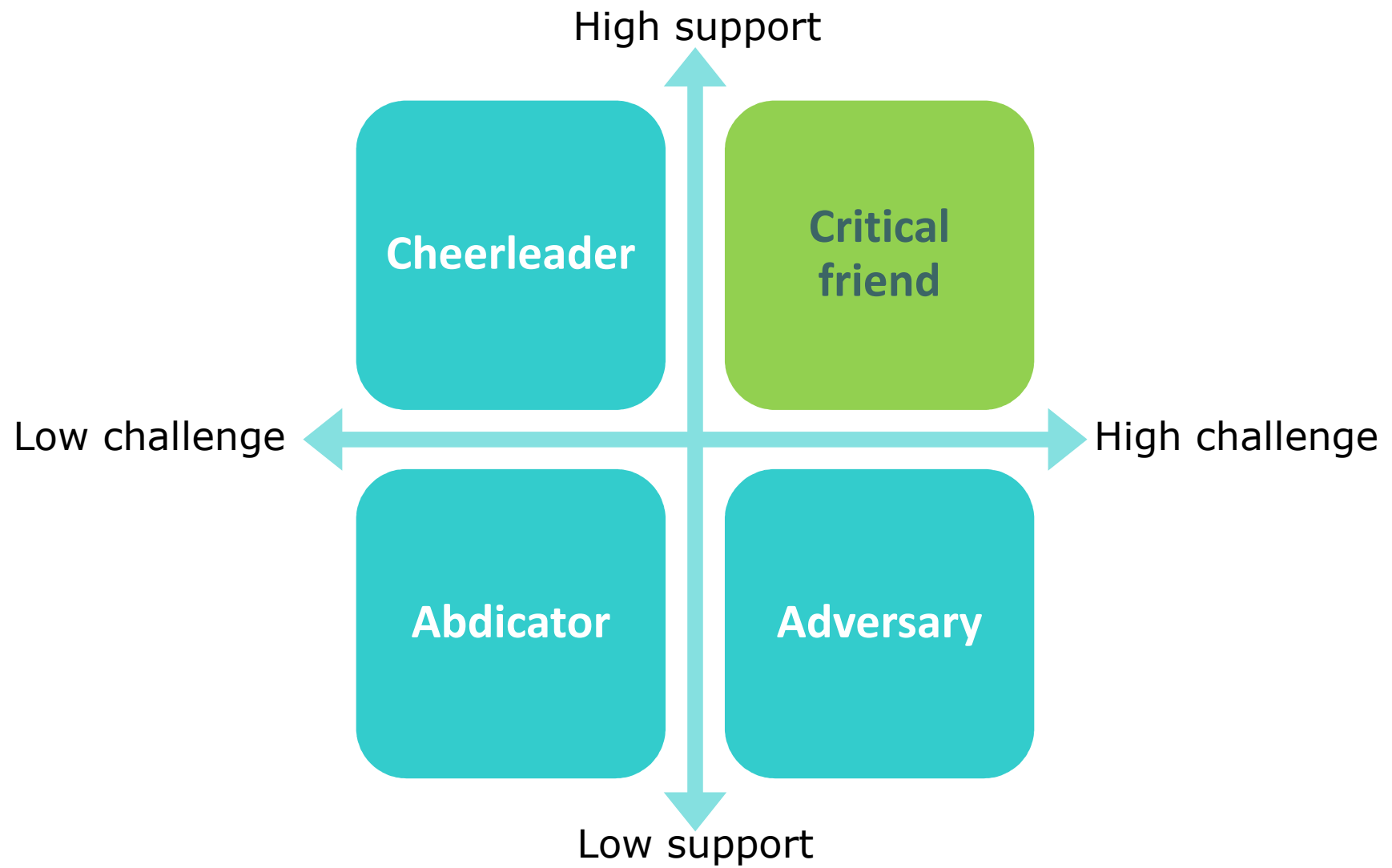- Engagement in planning
- Professional development

Self assessment can be difficult

Final thoughts

- A process, not an event
- Owned, not imposed
- An art, not a science
- Size doesn't matter
- Inclusive
- Effective

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LG **PRO**
PROFESSIONALS
Winner
2011 Awards for Excellence
Innovation in Management

Questions?

www.acig.com.au
www.slv.vic.gov.au
www.publiclibrariesvictoria.net.au