

# Transforming evaluation: Necessary but not sufficient to make a meaningful contribution to society

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# Aes18 Conference themes

## Transformations

- Transformations in diversity and power
- Transformations in digital innovation, big data and user-centred design
- Systems transformation
- Capability and mindsets

# Recent observations from Agriculture Victoria



Economic Development,  
Jobs, Transport  
and Resources





Economic Development,  
Jobs, Transport  
and Resources





DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20305-6000

[REDACTED]  
**THE TROOPS [REDACTED] ARE**

[REDACTED] **HAVING** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **A** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **BLAST**

[REDACTED] **HERE.** [REDACTED]

Robert Kuok, A Memoir delay?!?



# Examples of the political nature of decision making

# Cashless welfare card



**Cashless welfare audit finds data on effectiveness severely flawed, but Government maintains scheme is working**

AM 18/7/2018, by political reporter Stephanie Borys

# NSW brumby plan



The New South Wales government's plan to protect wild horses from lethal culling inside Kosciuszko national park will "veto evidence-based management" of their environmental impact, the RSPCA has warned.

The Guardian Australia Edition 4/6/2018, Michael McGowan

# Victorian prisoners playing local football



“I don’t think the program is meeting the expectations of the Victorian community”

Premier Daniel Andrews, ABC News 10/8/2018

# Regional Forest Agreements



“It’s about time somebody started calling out some members of our environmental scientific community for the rubbish that they put out in the marketplace, believing that the word ‘professor’ or ‘doctor’ before their name somehow gives them some sort of legitimacy to say things”.

Senator Janet Rice, Feb 2018

# What is happening here?

# Sandra Mathison



Evaluation is much more than a technical practice; it is also a moral and values-laden one.

AEA Newsletter: May 2012 Vol12, Issue 5

# David Slattery



Evaluators need to be aware of and manage the political forces that shape the scope and outcomes of evaluations. Otherwise, evaluations may be little more than a tool for reinforcing existing power relations rather than a neutral and objective means of improving social policies or programs.

The political inherency of evaluation 2010

# Justin Parkhurst



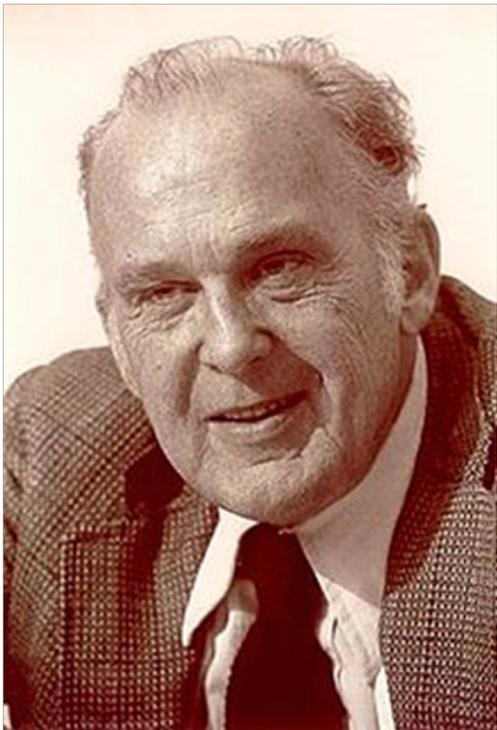
## Problems with evidence-based policy making

**Technical bias:** whereby evidence use violates principles of scientific best practice

**Issues bias:** whereby social values can be obscured or marginalised through the promotion of certain forms or bodies of evidence

*The Politics of Evidence: From evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence. 2016.*

# Donald T. Campbell



## Trapped administrator

When the political and administrative system has committed itself in advance to the correctness and efficacy of its reforms, the trapped administrator cannot tolerate learning of failure.

*An inventory of threats to validity and alternative designs to control them. 1999*

# Eleanor Chelimsky



Evaluators won't always win, of course, in trying to maintain their independence against much more powerful forces. Still, we do have some effective weapons to deploy in the fight, and among these are thoughtful, *realistic* planning, the capacity to negotiate, a reputation for technical credibility, and a ferocious unwillingness to be intimidated.

American Journal of Evaluation 2008 Vol 29 No 4

# Michelle Grattan



Economic Development,  
Jobs, Transport  
and Resources

What's really critical is the culture — in a party and in the political system generally. And once that's been corroded, it's a devil of a job to scrape the rust off.

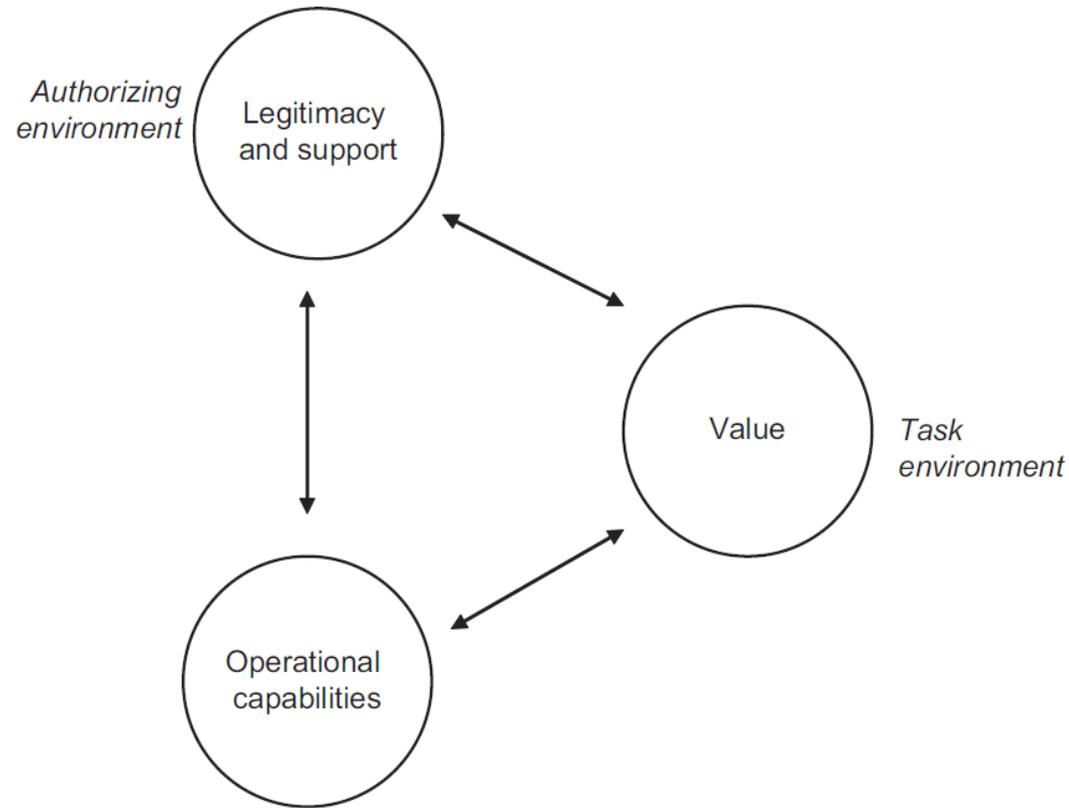
Australian politicians' coup culture holds serious dangers for our democracy. The Conversation 31/8/2018

## References

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- Mathison, S 2017, 'Does evaluation contribute to the public good?' keynote address presented at the Australasian Evaluation Society International Evaluation Conference, Canberra, Australia, 3-7 September.
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- Slattery, D 2010, 'The political inherency of evaluation: The impact of politics on the outcome of 10 years of evaluative scrutiny of Australia's mandatory detention policy', *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 10.1 17-27

**Thank you and now for questions**

## Making Sense of Public Value



*Figure 1.* The “strategic triangle” (Moore, 1995).

Alford J & O’Flynn J 2009, ‘Making sense of Public Value: concepts, critiques and emergent meanings’, *International Journal of Public Administration*, 32, 171-191.

# Performance Management Framework

For Victorian Government Departments  
March 2016

Updated June 2017



Treasury  
and Finance

Economic Development,  
Jobs, Transport  
and Resources

## Mandatory requirements for lapsing program evaluation

Data may include . . . quantitative data collection methods and quantitative analysis methods.

Note – while qualitative data collection methods and qualitative analysis methods may also be provided, **greater weighting will be given to quantitative information** provided.

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