GOOD EVALUATION PRACTICE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SETTINGS

presented by the
Project Working Group

AES Conference – Sydney, 18 Sept 2019

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A 'new' project using the BetterEvaluation website
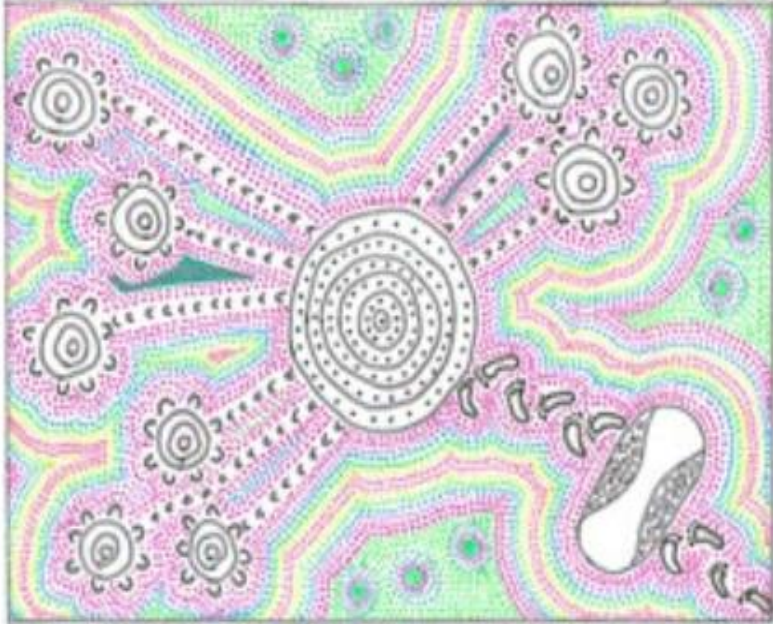
Evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings

The aim of these new pages is to help those conducting or managing evaluations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings to learn from examples of good practice to improve the benefit of evaluation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Visit the new set of theme pages to find examples of good practice evaluations and guidance on applying the ethical protocol developed as part of this project.

About the project

- Rather than asking contributors to share their IP and ICIP (such as existing tools related to evaluation), we **identify good practice evaluations** and provide communities the opportunity to assess them.

- Only good practice evaluations that have **a positive community assessment** are included on the website.

- This **strengths-based approach** ensures that the website promotes what is working.

- Evaluation should always have the intent to **benefit those evaluated**.
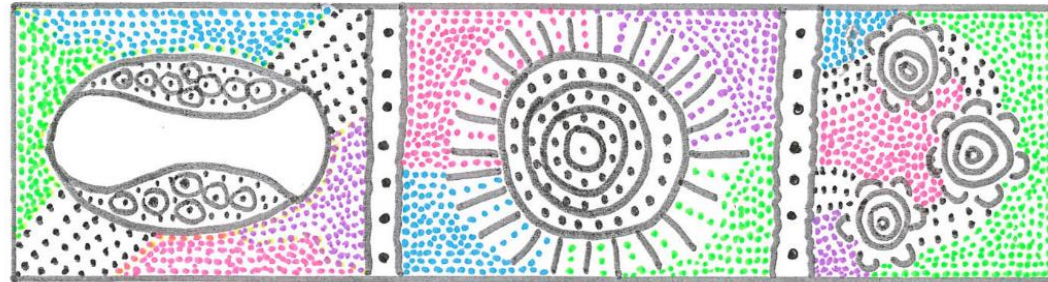
Acknowledgements

- Project Working Group: Belinda Gibb & Sharon Babyack (Indigenous Community Volunteers), Donna Stephens (Menzies School of Health Research), Kate Kelleher (Kate Kelleher Consulting), Carol Vale & Debbie Hoger (Murawin Consulting), and Greet Peersman (BetterEvaluation)

- Elizabeth Mason, Solicitor at Terri Janke and Company

- Members of the Advisory Group & the Steering Committee

- Artwork by Maria Stephens, an Arrabi/Binning woman who speaks the Iwaidja language

- Funding by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Indigenous Affairs) and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)

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Code of Conduct for the BetterEvaluation team
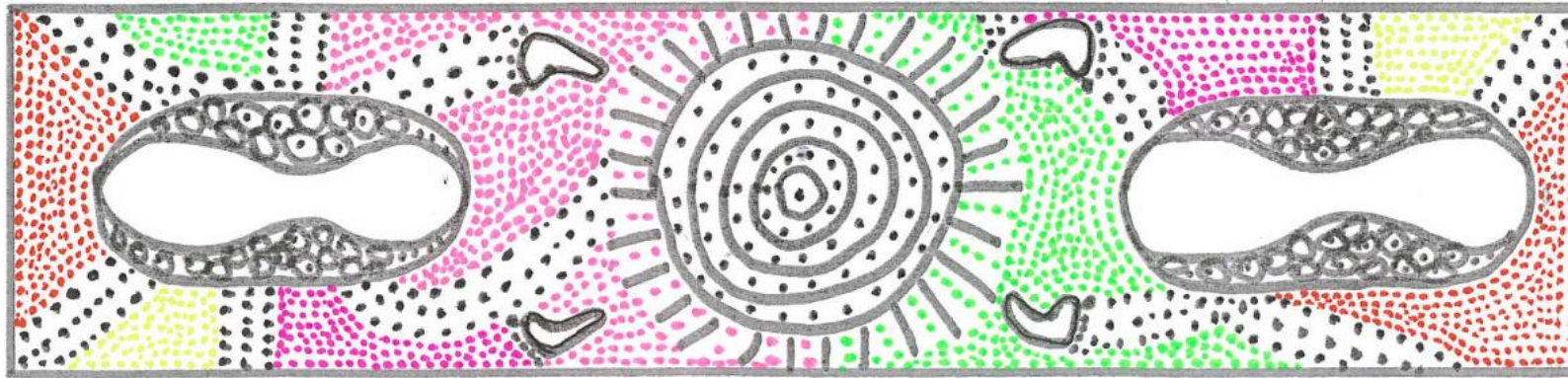
Culturally safe evaluation practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

To enable high standards of practice by the BetterEvaluation team when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about sharing examples of evaluation practice.

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What is 'good practice' in these settings?

Our Ethical Protocol

- is principles-based and offers the flexibility to be applied across various contexts, evaluation methods and approaches.

- prioritises self-determination and reinforces the inherent human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- provides guidance on the practical application of the principles at every stage of an evaluative activity

High quality ethics → Trust with participants → Increased accuracy of data → Informed & improved program design → Improved outcomes and positive change

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Prioritise self-determination, community agency and self-governance

Communicate transparently, build trust and obtain individual and community consent

Facilitate control and data sovereignty

COURAGE, INTEGRITY, & CULTURAL HUMILITY

Formalise accountability processes on ethical practice

Strengths-based recognition of cultures, acknowledging communities and individuals

Share benefits and apply two-way learning

Power and privilege
Limited scope from commissioner
Resource constraints
Limited cultural understanding
Data gate keeping
Can't find community protocols
No tools or templates
Time restrictions
No cultural mentor

Key themes

Barriers

¹ Barriers have been identified by the BetterEvaluation working party. These barriers will be further tested and reviewed as part of the interviews to be undertaken in the next phase of the project.

Key themes of the Ethical Protocol for evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings

- The themes are represented in a circle to illustrate a holistic approach to ethical evaluation practice – <u>all themes are equally important</u>; each theme must be addressed.

- A tool to frame and design an ethical approach to apply throughout all stages of an evaluative activity.

- A tool to communicate to participants the ethical standards that will be adhered to within the evaluative activity.

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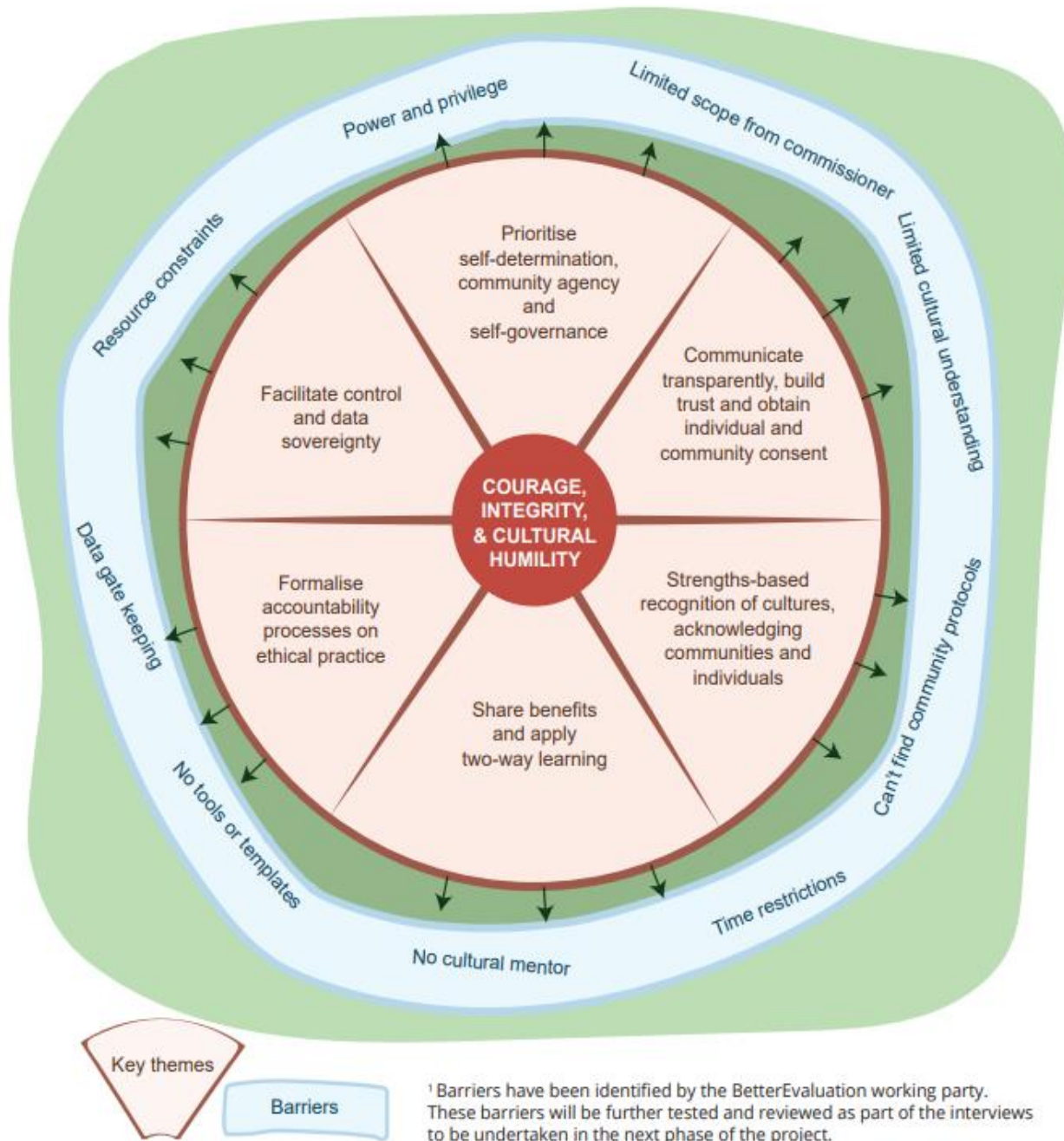
**Overcoming barriers to ethical practice in evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings**

- Barriers to ethical practice in evaluations (depicted in the outer ring) have been identified by evaluators and communities.

- Adherence to the Protocol, along with courage, integrity and cultural humility, will assist with overcoming these barriers.
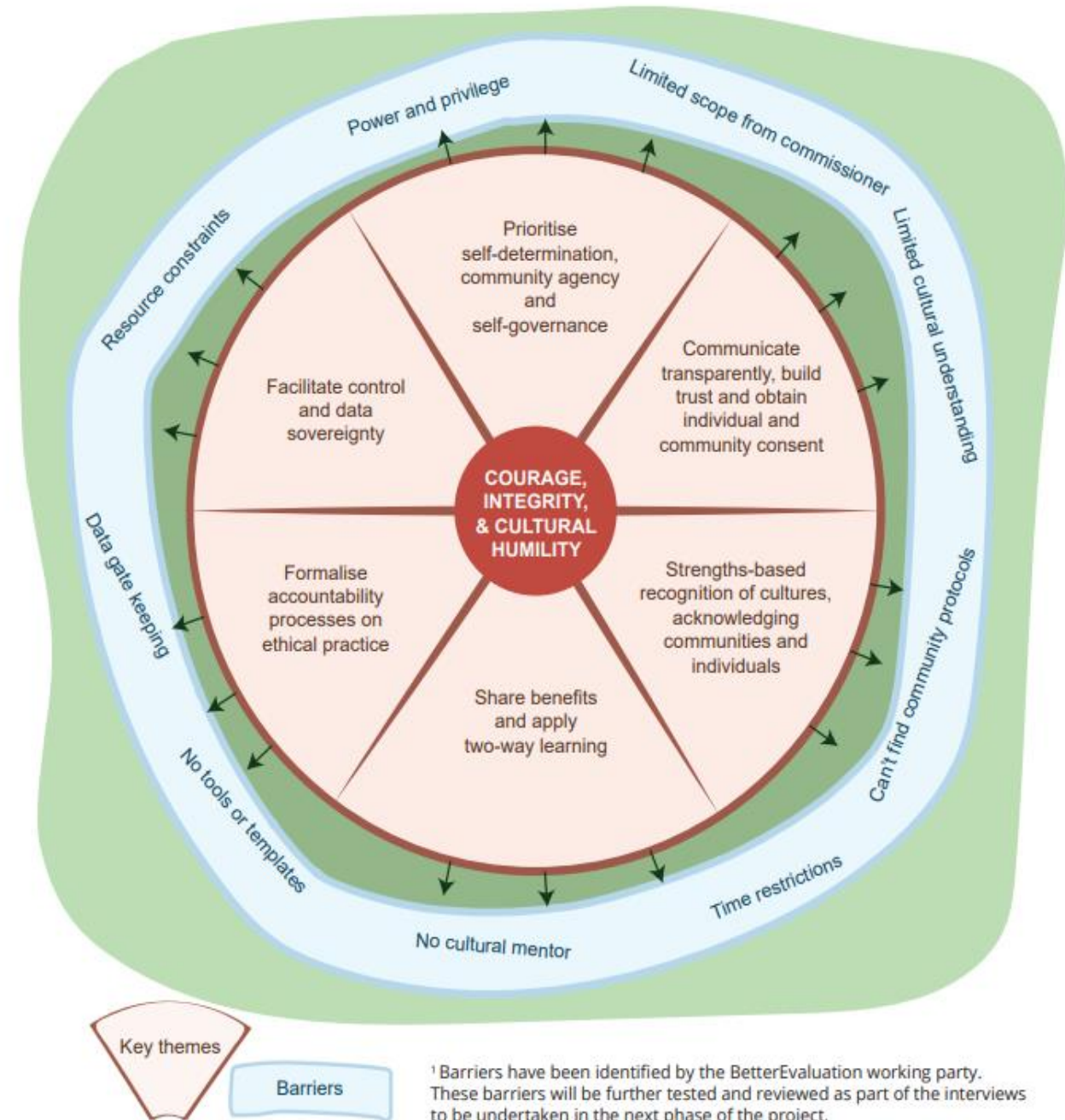
Prioritise self-determination, community agency and self-governance
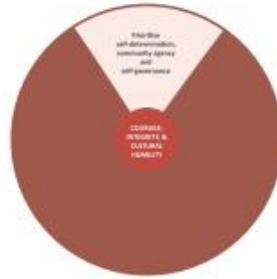
Empowerment principle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to self-determination and to be encouraged and empowered in decision-making processes. Evaluators must listen and advise to the benefit of communities above all else.

How to put this into practice:

- ☐ This involves time, ongoing negotiation, consultation and informing custodians about the implications of participating in the evaluation.

- ☐ Seek what is important and what needs to be evaluated from the community – take a ground up perspective to understand community priorities. Even top down projects should include community-led evaluation, together with what funders want to know.

- ☐ Ensure you have an established relationship with a community before you commence the evaluation. If you do not have an established relationship, consider partnering with someone who does.

- ☐ Before commencing the evaluation, ensure communities have a full understanding of the intent of the evaluation and that their input is valued and welcomed. Discuss and identify how the evaluation will benefit them, including the ownership of data.

- ☐ Include community members in the co-design phase of the evaluation. Accept that you may need to return to the evaluation commissioner with a revised approach.

- ☐ In consultation with community members, choose the most appropriate method(s) to collect and/or retrieve data. For a list of examples refer to the BetterEvaluation Rainbow Framework (https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework).

- ☐ Include community members in the collection and retrieval of data and analysis of numeric and textual data patterns.

- ☐ Build community capacity and if needed capability to engage in data collection in ways that are meaningful to the community.

The Ethical Protocol provides principles and guidance on how to respect the elders, cultural knowledge, and lands and seas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Starting the journey with two examples

- Grounded in community-endorsed practice
- Seeking input from evaluators and communities
- Strengths-based learning

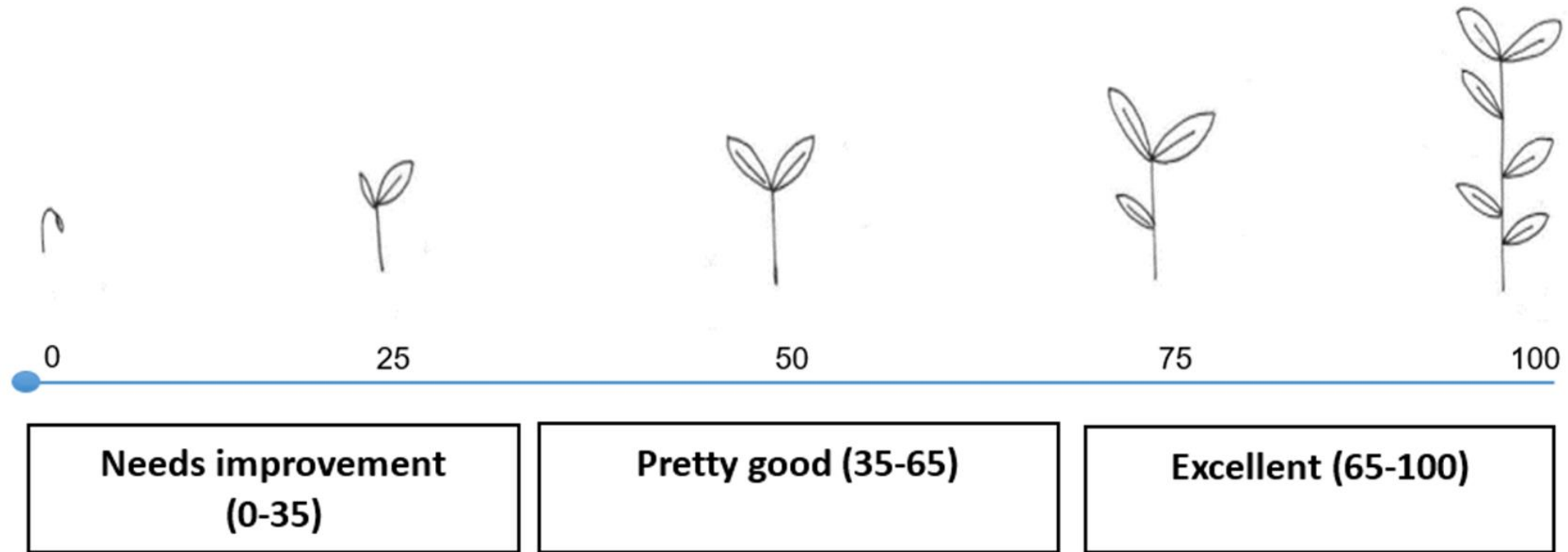# Applying the Ethical Protocol

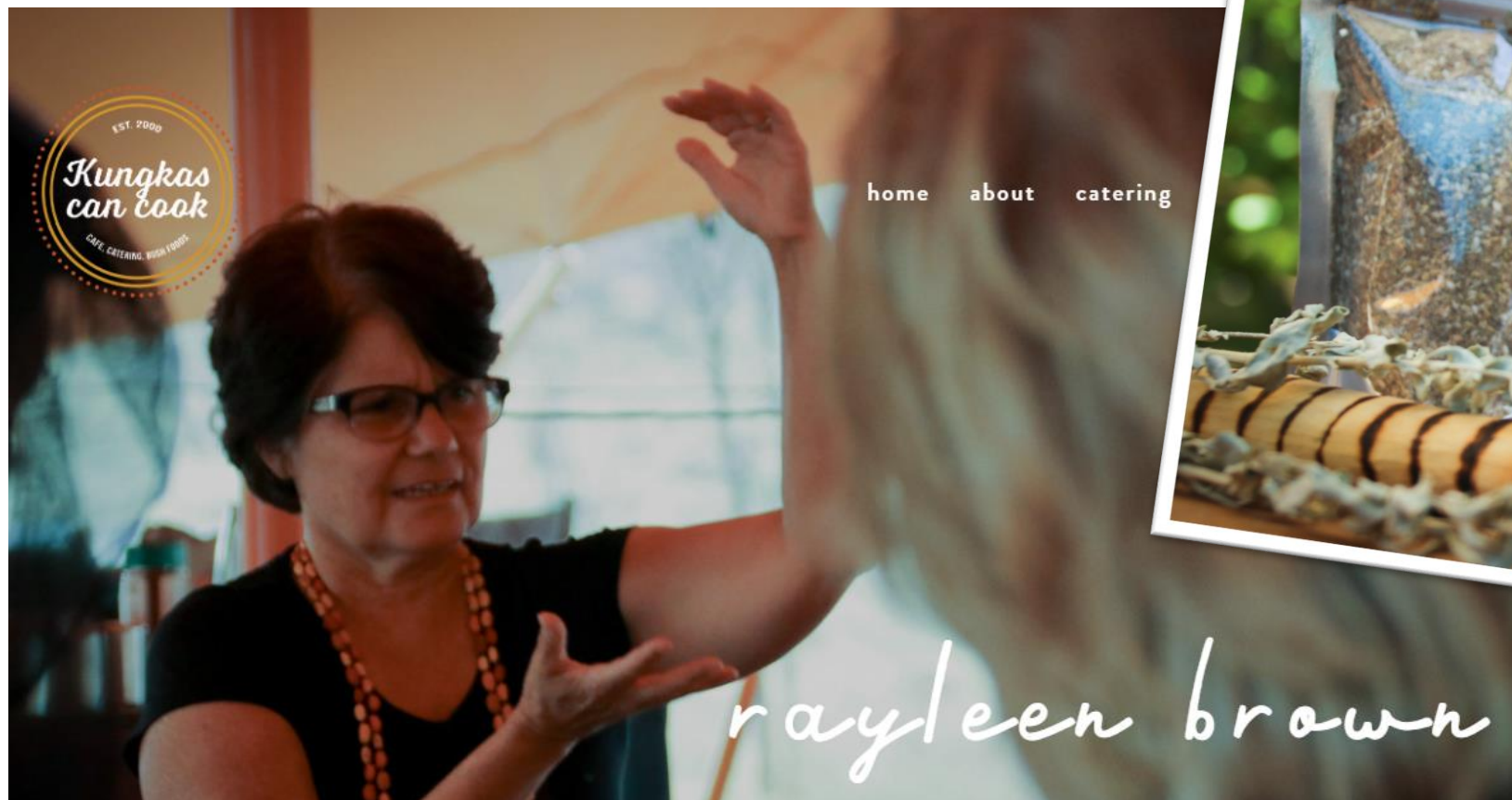## How do we identify examples of good practice?

We used the ethical protocol to identify 'potential' examples of good practice. We then interviewed community members about the evaluation to obtain their perspective on it. When they scored it high on each ethical domain, the example is shared here (see map).

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The ratings of the evaluation practice were guided by the 'seed to tree' scale

| 0 | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 |

| Needs improvement (0-35) | Pretty good (35-65) | Excellent (65-100) |

Seed to Tree – Scale used for interviews

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Example: Kungkas Can Cook

Overview of the evaluator and the evaluation

Website
E-commerce store
Photography
Video blogs

Finance and accounting

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5. How would you rate the level of benefit the community received from the evaluation?

Client Response	Evaluator Response	Interviewer Reflections
A high level of benefit was perceived by the client. Enabled a clear vision and development of the business that included a sense of freedom, connection to place, people and vision. This was a journey of walking together.	Community track and decide on their own levels of growth. This is vital to a sense of being heard and ownership. At times it is important to understand outcomes for individual objectives rather than overall project outcomes.	To fully benefit from the process the organisation engages in self-reflection through feedback loops with the client. This must push the boundaries of the relationship beyond supportive and strengthening to engage in critical practices.

Assessment of good practice – how was the evaluation rated?

"I find that really great, that process that you are taking me through, step by step. It's not been that you guys [ICV] are lifting me up, but you're walking beside me. That's how I feel it is, it's a walk beside thing."

Rayleen Brown, Kungkas Can Cook founder

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Example: Littlewell

"It's like my sister mentioned in one of her interviews, it's a place of healing. It's a place where we've been exposed to a lot of violence, and quite a few of our family's been taken away and put into missions. But, we survived, and the reason I say we survived... They knocked us down. We've been knocked to the ground, but we got up, and we continue on fighting for something that's really close to our heart."

Thomas Cameron, Littlewell Working Group elected spokesperson

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"Flexibility is the key when working with communities as the community needs to own the process, the space and vision. Rigid structures do not work as things can change."

Doyen Radcliffe, ICV Regional Manager

"I'm the sort of person, I like sitting down and listening to the old people yarning. I grew up knowing that, you know? And they've got an encyclopedia of knowledge. If we can get somebody to sit down and listen to them, they don't write it in books. They tell you the stories of the history of our people, and I guess that's rewarding to do that."

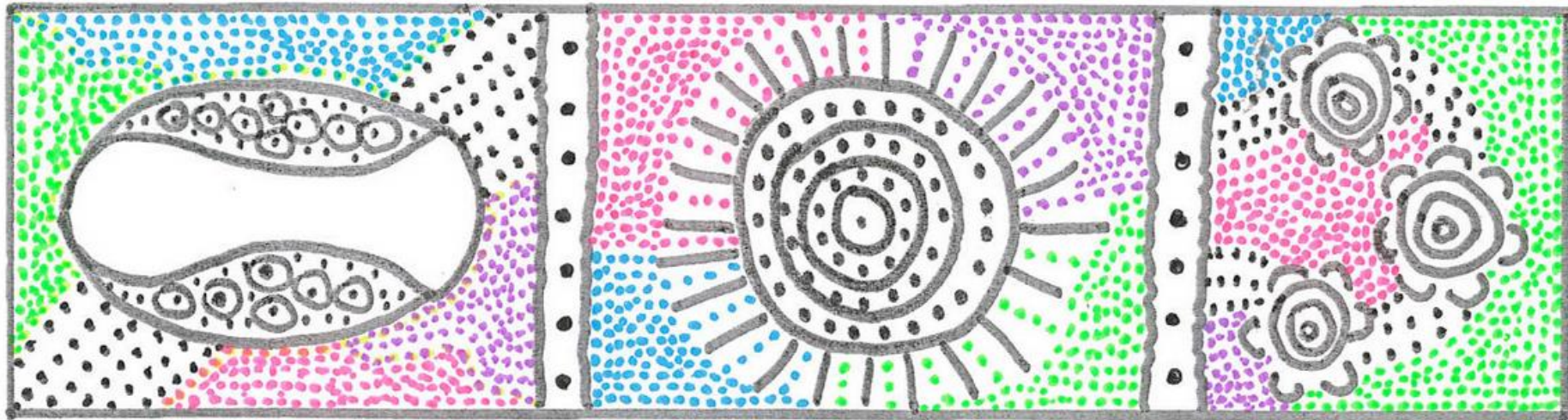Thomas Cameron, Littlewell Working Group elected spokesperson

Learning from ethical practice implementation

Putting principles into practice – how was it done?

Read more about how the M&E approach was implemented and how the community benefited from it here.

Referring back to the Ethical Protocol, read more about how the M&E work with Kungkas Can Cook put the principles into practice here.

Download the full write up of this example here.

Learning from ethical practice implementation

Diversity	*Recognise the diversity and uniqueness of First Nations Cultures, Peoples and Individuals.*	Time was taken at the outset to understand Kungkas and its context. Situated in Alice Springs, and connected to many different remote communities, Kungkas is a careful and respectful custodian of many First Nations communities' bushfoods practices. The evaluator and volunteers followed Kungkas lead and instruction on how to manage these relationships and connections to multiple First Nations cultures.
Inclusion	*Involve Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people in all levels of the evaluation, from design phase right through to analysis and communicating findings.*	Informal yarning was used throughout the co-design and delivery of the project. In addition, Kungkas knew there would be assessment points at the start and end of the project. A participatory approach of transect walking was highly suited as an M&E approach . To 'walk and talk' about the organisation while viewing the site of the business, products and significance of different bush foods.

Where from here?

What BE is doing:

- Fund raising to be able to share many more examples of good practice from communities across Australia

What you can do:

- Provide feedback
- Alert us to potential examples
- Become a member of BE

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the various webpages linked to Evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings, and any of the products related to this project.

Give feedback

Questions & Answers

Further information: greet@betterevaluation.org