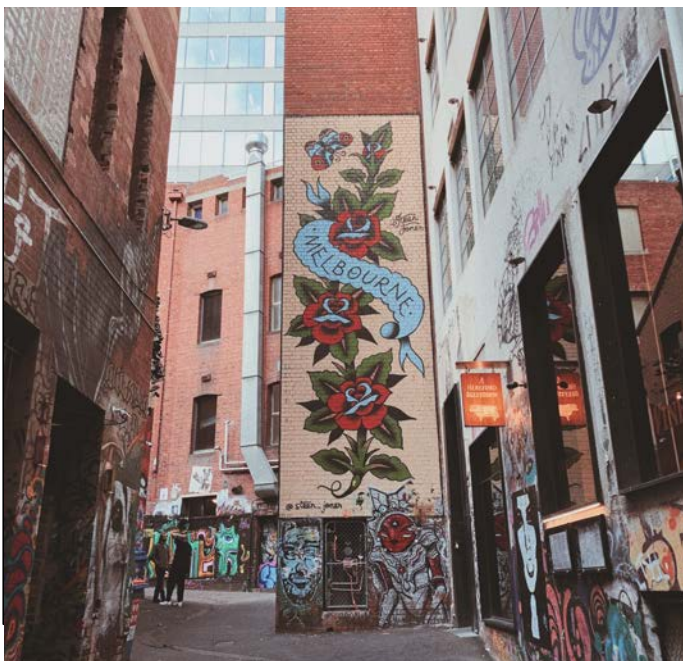




I'd like to acknowledge we are on Yagara and Turrbal country and pay respect to them as the traditional owners. I grew up on Bundjalung country and studied here, so its wonderful to be home.



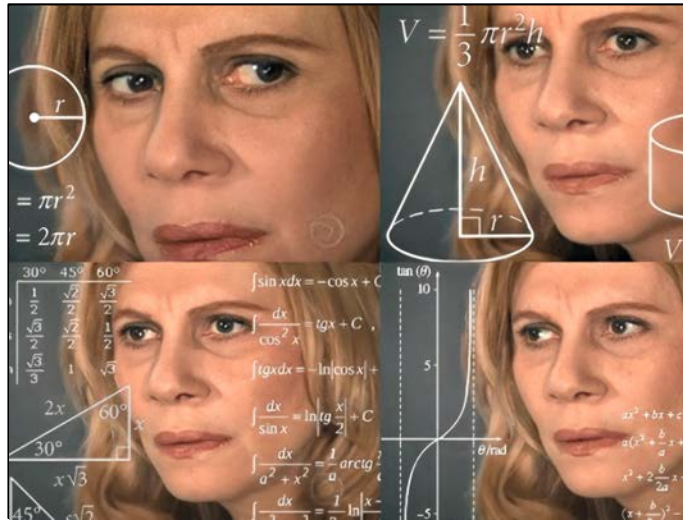
Gday, My name is Josh Duyker and I'm an emerging evaluator from the Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence, or CERE, at the Department of Health in Victoria.



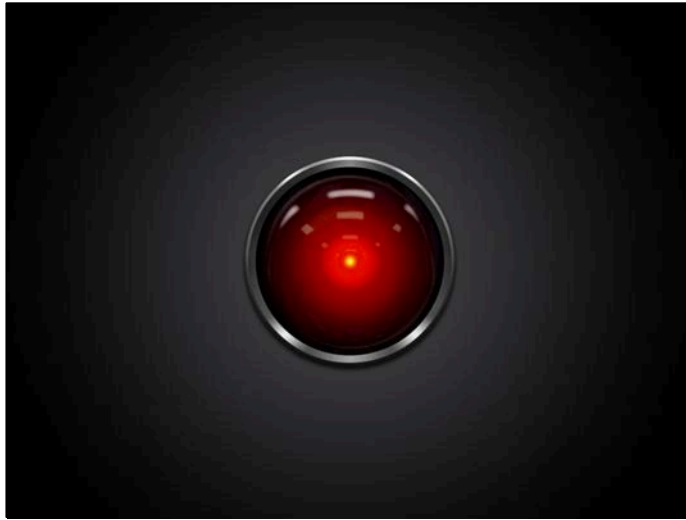
CERE is one of the biggest in-house government evaluation units in the country. We serve two large government departments and use evaluation to make a difference to the lives of fellow Victorians.



Values are intertwined and infused in everything around us, including the programs and policies we evaluate. Because of this, Values are present throughout the entire evaluation process.



A recent reflective exercise with colleagues has left me with the question: who's values actually matters in evaluation? Is it the evaluator, the commissioner or the participants? and How can we better honour values in practice?



Being in 2023, I posed this question to CHAT GPT, which essentially told me 'Duh, everyone's values matter in evaluation BUT it is up to the evaluator to maintain their own values in their practice.'



Of course, everyone's values matter in an evaluation. After all, it is our role as evaluators are to surface ALL the relevant values and perspectives so we can make better judgements about evaluands.



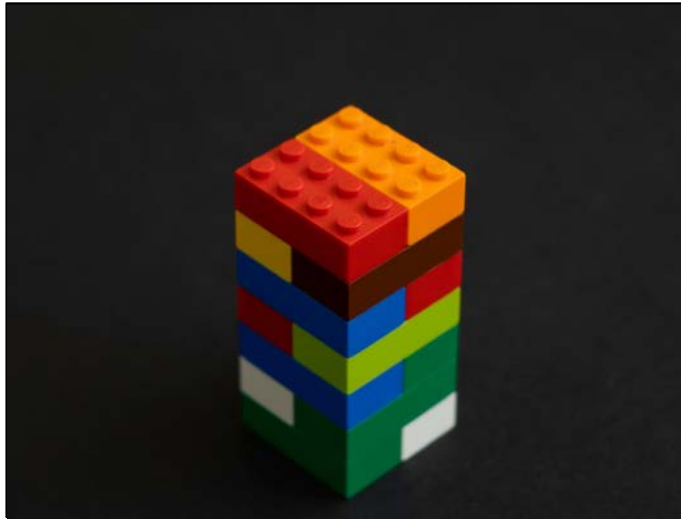
But as my colleagues and I reflected on recent experience, it can be tricky at times as evaluators to surface and balance the differing values, whilst maintaining your own values as evaluators



For this particular evaluation, the writing was on the wall from the beginning that there likely was going to be differences in values between the evaluators and the commissioner.



Differences are ok and to be expected, especially when you have multiple stakeholders with different levels of power and influence, and different ideas on what is important and credible



To strike the balance in values, we did a lot of listening to understand their position, while being direct, clear and purposeful with our own to find a medium where evaluation quality was high and expectations were met.



It was hard, we did feel deflated at times, but I am proud of what we achieved together. Our saving grace was strong leadership and a grounding in our values.

Which then raises the question, what are the values of evaluators?



, a recent US study found that evaluators as a collective do have shared values. We:

- value benevolence, achievement, and universalism,

- lean socially liberal, except are more conservative on fiscal issues and

value competence, independence and opportunities for growth in the workplace.



To honour our values in our practice, we need to know them. While we inherently know our values subconsciously, we actually need to put in the work and be reflective to bring them into our consciousness.



To do our role better as evaluators, we need to recognise that we too have values and while we can maintain independence and objectivity, we can't fully separate our own personal and professional values from our practice.



There is no roadmap in evaluation in how to navigate values, and we are just starting to see some amazing work from thought leaders in the space trialing approaches from other disciplines, which is really exciting



So here are my key takeaways: **Do the reflective work – know your values.** We are humans, not robots, we aren't value neutral. Get comfortable with knowing your values and recognising your biases. Consider them a strength.



Be explicit and up front about values – both yours and your stakeholders, and understand their influence on the evaluation. Whether that is through conversations, through templates or through your evaluation planning.



Stand up for your values and the values of others, even if it means frenzying the piranhas! This is not about power, but honouring your values and the values of others. Values will differ and that is ok!



If our goal as evaluators is to see a better world, we need to lean into our own values, recognise and considers the values of others and be more reflexive with values in our evaluation practice.