

# Decolonising Evaluation

**Temira Dewis**

Director of Strategy, ABSTARR

**Tom Hannon**

Manager, Research and Evaluation, Victorian Department of  
Families, Fairness and Housing

AES Conference Presentation

**27<sup>th</sup> September 2023**



ΔBSTARR

[www.abstarr.com](http://www.abstarr.com)

# Presentation overview

- ❖ Introducing ABSTARR
- ❖ Decolonising evaluation
- ❖ ABSTARR Methodology
  - ❖ Capability Approach
  - ❖ Principles-Based Approach
  - ❖ Applied Model of Cultural Safety

# Who Are We?

- **A**boriginal **S**traight **T**alking **A**bout **R**esponsibility and **R**espect
- Professor Gregory Phillips (ABSTARR CEO)
- 4 ABSTARR Pillars: Training and Knowledge; Strategy; Evaluation; and Well@Work
- 'The art and science of decolonisation'

# Decolonising evaluation

- Decolonising evaluation really comes down to:
  - Who owns and controls knowledge and resources?
  - Who does the decision-making?
  - Who participates and implements?
  - What are terms of that participation?
- Self-determination is important because:
  - Better outcomes
  - Human right
  - Aboriginal people have asked for it
  - Government policy

# ABSTARR Methodology

## Capability Approach

- 'Functionings' refers to the things a person may value doing or being (E.g. self-determined).
- 'Capabilities' on the other hand refers to a person's or group's freedom or opportunity to achieve those functionings of value to the individuals or groups (p. 75).
- The capability approach argues that development should be about expanding people's capabilities to live a life they have reason to value

(Sen, 1999)

# ABSTARR Methodology

## Principles-Based Approach

- Working in dynamic environment
- Clarity of definitions – agreeing standards as part of evaluation planning was is practical way of defining measures of success

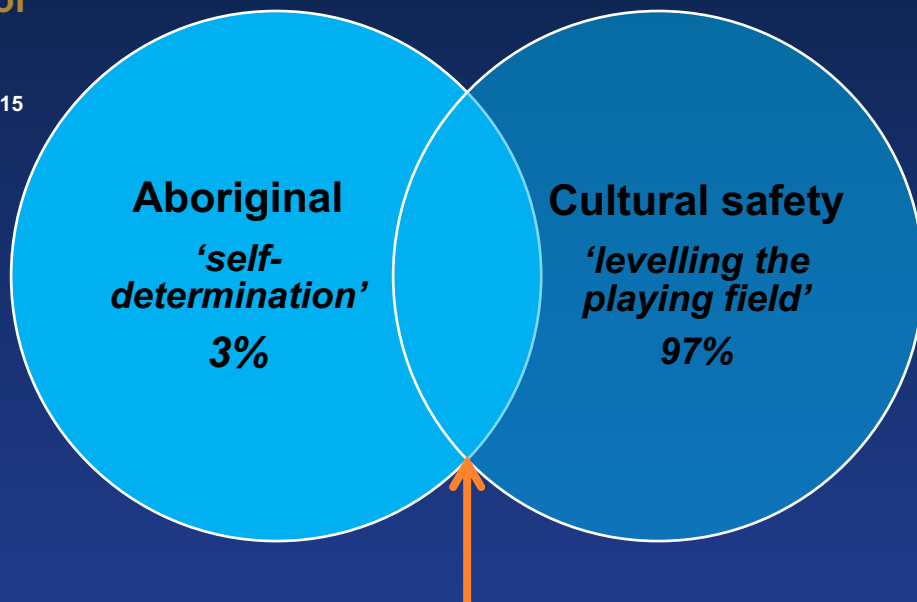
(Patton, 2017)

**To learn more:** Patton, Michael Q. "Principles-focused evaluation." Guilford: New York, NY, USA (2017).

# ABSTARR Methodology

## Applied Model of Cultural Safety

© Phillips 2015



**Indigenous Knowledges and Aboriginal Terms of Reference** (Watson, 1990) – depends on pedagogy of place (Gruenwald, 2003), context, history, social phenomena, languages, customs, cultures, spiritualities and religions



# Acknowledgement

## Aboriginal voice, knowledge and cultural leadership

The thinking and expertise presented in this slide pack has been developed through working collaboratively for and with:

- **Aboriginal Workforce Fund Steering Committee**
- Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum Koorie Caucus
- ABSTARR
- Aboriginal organisations
- Aboriginal Self-determination and Outcomes Division leadership

# Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (2018-2023)

The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework is a core self-determination policy



Weaker forms

**Notify/Inform:** Community/Community sector about a new program or service. Or notify/inform Aboriginal departmental staff **as a substitute** for authentic community engagement about decisions, programs and policies that affect community.

**Consult on a program** or policy (or narrow aspects of) that is almost ready for market (not much scope for change).

**Collaboration** that is underpinned by relational ways of working; Authentic relationships, equity and respect for the right to self determination are centred before new work begins.

**Co-designing, co-creating, sharing decision-making,** management, monitoring and evaluation of resources and outcomes.

Stronger forms

**Transferring decision making, and resources to** community control, owned, led, measured and evaluated by community.

OFFICIAL

# Aboriginal Workforce Fund (AWF – Jan22-June23)

## Applying the Aboriginal Self-determination Continuum to workforce development

The AWF was set up in response to Aboriginal workforce needs through COVID-19:

- \$9 million from Jan 2022-June 2023
- Design, delivery, allocation, monitoring and evaluation overseen by the Aboriginal Workforce Fund Steering Committee
- 24 large, medium and small Aboriginal organisations supported to self-determine workforce development

### **Broad workforce development domains:**

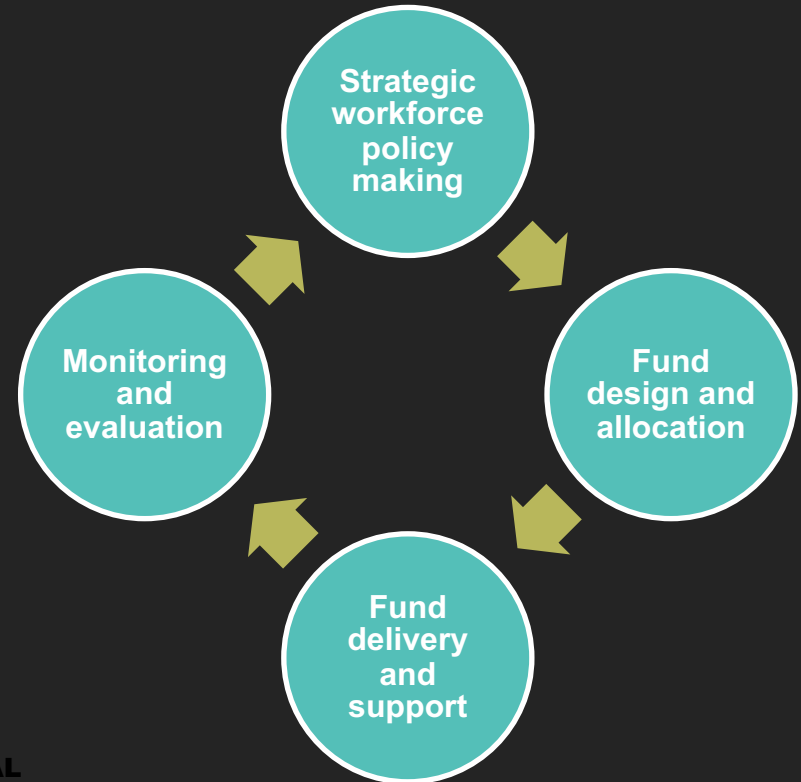
- Growing and upskilling the Aboriginal sector workforce
- Advancing Aboriginal governance and leadership
- Building the future Aboriginal workforce
- Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal workers and clients
- Organisational capability and system reform to advance self-determination and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

# Aboriginal Terms of Reference

Negotiating the Aboriginal Terms of Reference set principles for evaluating self-determination

The AWF Steering Committee principles/  
Terms of Reference:

1. Agency and control
2. Equity
3. Collaboration and Collectivity
4. Respect for the Aboriginal Sector



# Aboriginal self-determination report card

Applying the self-determination principles across the policy cycle as part of a process evaluation

*“[The AWF process] was the next best thing to full self-determination. [The only thing that could improve this process] was if Aboriginal people have control over it from the start, the allocation of [state budget] funding [that is] the money pool sits with Aboriginal people, and they decide”*

| Self-determination principle      | Strategic workforce policy making | Fund design and allocation    | Fund delivery and support        | Monitoring and evaluation          |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Agency and control                | Political governance              | Adapted Conflict of Interest  |                                  | Aboriginal governed, and delivered |
| Equity                            |                                   | Re-distributed allocations    |                                  | Low burden reporting               |
| Collaboration and collectivity    |                                   | Non-competitive and supported | Representation and communication | Respecting diverse experiences     |
| Respect for the Aboriginal Sector |                                   |                               |                                  | Respecting data sovereignty        |

# Key lessons

## Government cannot own or silo self-determination

- Governments role is to support, facilitate, and enable
- You can't fully realise self-determination by siloing effort
- What constitutes self-determination is context dependent
- Self-determination deliberations help set standards for implementation and evaluation
- Government processes, rules and legislation are barriers to strong self-determination
- Treaty and supporting the transformation for realising full self-determination

# Questions and Answers

# References

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association. (2016). *Report on the findings of the 2016 AIDA member survey on bullying, racism and lateral violence in the workplace*. Canberra: AIDA.
- Ahmed, S. (2007). "A phenomenology of whiteness." *Feminist Theory*, 8(2):149-168.
- Bacchi, C. (2012). "Why study problematizations? Making politics visible", *Open Journal of Political Science*, 2: 1-8.
- Behrendt, L, Jorgensen, M & Vivian, A. (2016). *Self-determination: background concepts – Scoping Paper 1 for Vic Dep of Health & Human Services*, UTS Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, Sydney.
- Bourke, C, Marrie, H, & Marrie, A. (2018) "Transforming institutional racism at an Australian hospital". *Australian Health Review* 43(6): 611-618.
- Bourdieu, P. (2004). *Science of science and reflexivity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Came, H. (2014). "Sites of institutional racism in health policy making in New Zealand." *Social Science and Medicine*, 106: 214-220.
- Chandler, M & LaLonde, C. 1998. "Cultural continuity as a hedge against suicide in Canada's First Nations", *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 35(2): 191-219.
- Clayton, H., et al. (2014). "Lifetime racism and blood pressure changes during pregnancy: implications for foetal growth". *Health Psychology*, 33(1): 43-51.
- Conor, L. (2015). "Adam Goodes: why Blackfella spectacles shouldn't make spectacles of themselves," *www.newmatilda.com*, 21 October.
- Cunningham, J. and Paradies, Y. (2013). "Patterns and correlates of self-reported racial discrimination among Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults, 2008-09: an analysis of national survey data." *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 12 (47): 1-15.
- Department of Health & Human Services. (2017). *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategy 2017-2027*. Melbourne: DHHS.
- de Plevitz, L. (2007). "Systemic racism: the hidden barrier to educational success for Indigenous school students." *Australian Journal of Education*, 51(1): 54-71.
- DiAngelo, R. (2011). "White Fragility". *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3): 54-70.
- Durie, M. (2004). "Understanding health and illness: research at the interface between science and Indigenous knowledge." *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 33(5): 1138-1143.
- Farmer, P. (2005). *Pathologies of power: health, human rights and the new war on the poor*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Foucault, M. (1982). "The subject and power," *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4): 777-795.
- Fredericks, B. (2009). "Look before you leap: the epistemic violence that sometimes hides behind the word "inclusion"." *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 38(S1): 10-16.
- Gerlach, A.J. 2012. "A critical reflection on the concept of cultural safety," *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 79(3):151-158.
- Gruenewald, D. (2003). "The best of both worlds: a critical pedagogy of place." *Educational Researcher*, 32(4): 3-12.
- Hartmann, D., J. Gerteis, and P.R. Croll. (2009) "An empirical assessment of whiteness theory: hidden from how many?" *Social Problems*, 56(3): 403-424.
- Hesse, B. (2011). Marked unmarked: Black politics and the Western political. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 110(4): 974-984.
- Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, J., et al. (2010). "Association between perceived racism and physiological stress indices in Native Hawaiians." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 35(1): 27-37.
- Klugman, M. & Osborn, G. (2014). *Black and Proud: the story of an iconic AFL photo*. Sydney: NewSouth Publishing.
- Land, C. (2015). *Decolonizing solidarity: dilemmas and directions for supporters of Indigenous struggles*. London: Zed Books. See <http://decolonizingsolidarity.org/>
- Larkin, S. (2014). *Race matters : Indigenous employment in the Australian public service*. PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology.
- Lutschini, M. (2005). "Engaging with holism in Australian Aboriginal health policy - a review." *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, 2(1): 15.
- Mader, M.B. (2011). "Sleights of the norm", in *Sleights of reason: norm, bisexuality, development*. State University of New York Press: Albany.



# References (cont.)

- Markwick, A. et al (2019). "Experiences of racism among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults living in the Australian state of Victoria: a cross-sectional population-based study". *BMC Public Health*, 19(309).
- McAllan, F. (2011). "Getting 'post-racial' in the 'Australian' state: what remains overlooked in the premise of 'getting beyond racism'?" *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association e-journal*, 7(1): 1-21.
- McDermott, D. (2012). "Can we educate out of racism?" *Medical Journal of Australia*, 197(1): 15.
- Medical Deans Australia & New Zealand and Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association (2012). *National Medical Education Review: A Review of the implementation of the Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework and the Healthy Futures Report within Australian medical schools*. Sydney, MDANZ and AIDA.
- Nelson, J. (2014). "Speaking' racism and anti-racism: perspectives of local anti-racism actors." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(2): 342-358.
- O'Neil, J., Reading, J. & Leader, A. (1998). "Changing the relations of surveillance: the development of a discourse of resistance in Aboriginal epidemiology." *Human Organization*, 1: 230-237.
- Papps, E. & Ramsden, I. 1996. "Cultural safety in nursing: the New Zealand experience." *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 8(5): 491-197.
- Paradies, Y., Truong, M. & Priest, N. (2014). "A systematic review of the extent and measurement of healthcare provider racism." *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 29(2): 364-387.
- Paul, D., Carr, S. & Milroy, H. (2006). "Making a difference: the early impact of an Aboriginal health undergraduate medical curriculum." *Medical Journal of Australia*, 184(10): 522-525.
- Phillips, G. (2015). *Dancing with power: Aboriginal health, cultural safety and medical education*. PhD thesis. School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University.
- Phillips, G. (2005). "Relationships, respect and responsibility: cultural safety and ensuring quality curriculum for Indigenous health in medical education." *Australian Universities Quality Forum 2005*. Sydney: Australian Universities Quality Association.
- Phillips, G. (2004). *CDAMS Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework*. Melbourne, Committee of Deans of Australian Medical Schools and VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit.
- Priest, N., et al. (2011). "Racism as a determinant of social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal Australian youth." *Medical Journal of Australia*, 194(10): 546-550.
- Purdie, N., Dudgeon, P. & Walker, R. (2010). *Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice*. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing.
- Ramsden, I. M. (2002). *Cultural safety and nursing education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu*. PhD in Nursing, Victoria University of Wellington.
- Ryder, C., Yarnold, D. & Pridaux, D. (2011). "Learning and unlearning: is communication with minority patients about self or others?" *Medical Teacher*, 33(10): 781-782.
- Robson, B., et al. (2012). "Overcoming racism to improve Indigenous cardiovascular health: tackling inequalities in cardiac health care." *Heart, Lung and Circulation*, 21(10): 649.
- Trent, M., Dooley, D. & Douge, J. (2019). "The impact of racism on child and adolescent health". *Pediatrics*, 144(2).
- UNICEF (2013). *Know your rights: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for Indigenous adolescents*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.
- Watson, L. (1990). *Aboriginal Terms of Reference*. Brisbane, Black Card. [www.theblackcard.com.au](http://www.theblackcard.com.au)
- Wepa, D. (2003). "An exploration of the experiences of cultural safety educators in New Zealand: an action research approach." *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 14(4): 339-348.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Halifax and Winnipeg, Fernwood Publishing.
- Zubrick, S., et al. (2005). *The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey: the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people. The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey, Vol. 2*. Perth: Curtin University of Technology and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.



jump up and travel with the light

ABSTARR Consulting Pty Ltd

[connect@abstarr.com](mailto:connect@abstarr.com)

[www.abstarr.com](http://www.abstarr.com)  
**OFFICIAL**