

# USING LOCAL LEVEL EVALUATION TO DRIVE VALUE IN HEALTH

Professor Andrew Searles; Professor Maree Gleeson;  
Ms Penny Reeves; Professor Christine Jorm;  
Professor Harriet Hiscock; Professor Helen Skouteris;  
Professor Jonathan Karnon; Professor Stephen Leeder;  
Dr Michael Daly

Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA), Health Systems Improvement and Sustainability (HSIS): Working Group 3

## Objectives



Review and report evidence on:

- Models for the evaluation of healthcare in Australia and internationally
- Gaps in the evaluation of healthcare in Australia
- Strategies to critically evaluate healthcare systems and technologies.<sup>1</sup>



Develop a framework to improve the evaluation of health-related technologies and models of care in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

## Methodology



Targeted review of the grey and peer-reviewed literature. Searches were conducted of electronic databases held by the University of Newcastle's Library. In addition, references were identified by hand searching internationally recognised documents. Direct contact was made with health services to seek further published information on healthcare evaluation.



Consultations with thirty-three senior managers and clinicians in twenty-seven health services across Australia. A purposive sample of contacts was identified by members of the AHRA Steering Committee. These consultations were mostly face-to-face; a minority were via telephone.



Framework building in this study drew on information from the literature, the interviews with senior health service representatives and an expert panel. Panel members were the authors of this study.<sup>1</sup>

## Implications

**A challenge was made:** The Productivity Commission presented a challenge in 2015 that was unanswered until this study. The challenge was to improve Australia's healthcare evaluation architecture to address waste and inefficiency.<sup>2,3</sup>

**What needs to happen?** There is a need to build national capacity and capability in healthcare evaluation, particularly at the local level. The following major recommendations were designed to address this need.



**Establish** a national Expert Panel to oversee a national approach to local level evaluation, recommend a curriculum in evaluation and implementation, and set threshold standards in evaluation and implementation.



**Boost** education and training, and professional development for clinical and managerial staff in evaluation and implementation. This recommendation will ensure a sustainable workforce that is evaluation and implementation capable.



**Increase** the workforce of skilled evaluation staff. These staff will be integrated into local health services, undertake evaluation and monitoring, and provide appropriate information to decision makers in healthcare.



**Facilitate** evaluation and implementation resources (financial) at the local level to support a sustainable integration of evaluation and implementation capability into health services.

NSW  
Regional  
HEALTH PARTNERS

This project was supported by the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) as part of the Rapid Applied Research Translation program



Proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with:  
Central Coast Local Health District  
Hunter New England Local Health District  
Mid North Coast Local Health District



phn  
Public Health Network  
Mid North Coast  
Local Health District



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE



# Australia spends \$180 billion per annum on health



# About \$36 billion of this annual amount is waste



# Local level evaluation is a means to address this waste

## Lessons Learned

Centralised evaluation works well for nationally provided technologies, such as medicines. It is also useful for setting standards but it fails to account for local context.

About 70% of Australia's healthcare spending occurs at the 'local level' such as health districts, hospitals and primary care. It is here where better evaluation is needed that accounts for local context.

The evaluation needs of local health services differ, as does their capability and capacity to conduct a rigorous evaluation.

Detailed recommendations provide a pathway to build capacity and capability in Australia's evaluation architecture, at the local level. This is an opportunity to improve the healthcare system in terms of effectiveness, equity and value.

See our full report: <https://nswregionalhealthpartners.org.au/2019/05/07/new-report-the-local-level-evaluation-of-healthcare-in-australia/>

### References:

- A. Searles, M. Gleeson, P. Reeves, C. Jorm, S. Leeder, J. Karnon, H. Hiscock, H. Skouteris and M. Daly, The Local Level Evaluation of Healthcare in Australia. NSW Regional Health Partners, Newcastle, NSW (2018).
- Australian Government: Productivity Commission, Efficiency in Health. Productivity Commission research paper, Canberra (2015a).
- Australian Government: Productivity Commission, Improving Australia's health system: what we can do now. PC News, Productivity Commission, Canberra (2015b).