



Lessons Management Forum 2025

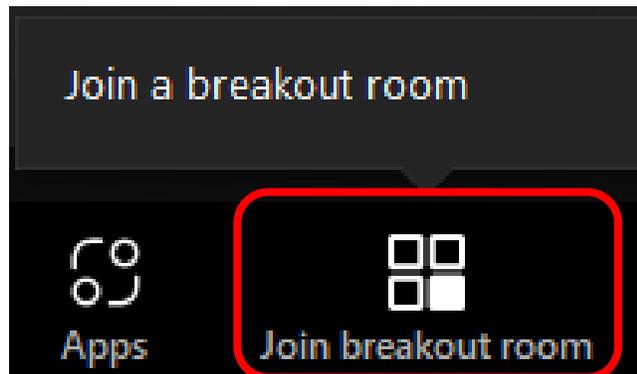
DAY 2 | 21 May 2025

Welcome

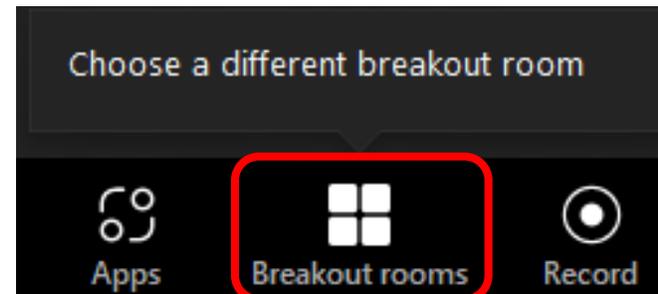


Break-out rooms are now open.

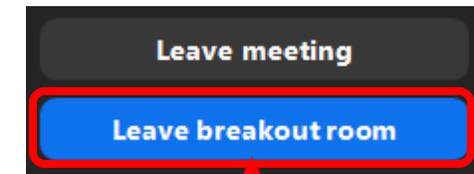
Feel free to join any of our break-out rooms and interact with the other online delegates.



To join from the main presentation room.



To change breakout rooms.



To return to main presentation room.

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Thank you for joining us.

Please take your seats, we will begin in 5-minutes.



Gold sponsor

Silver sponsor

Acknowledgement of Country

AFAC and AIDR would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of Aotearoa / New Zealand and Australia.

We acknowledge the Treaty Partners in Aotearoa / New Zealand and in particular the local iwi and environment of the Te Āti Awa people – tēnā koutou katoa.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters across Australia.

Lessons Management Sponsors

Gold Sponsor



Australian Government

Australian Civil-Military Centre

Silver Sponsor



**National Emergency
Management Agency**

Te Rākau Whakamarumarū
Aotearoa New Zealand

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Welcome

Des Hosie

National Advisor for Safety, Continuous Improvement and Lessons Management

Fire & Emergency New Zealand



Gold sponsor

Silver sponsor

House Keeping

- Please ensure all phones are switched to silent and microphones are muted.
- In the case of an emergency, please follow staff instructions.
- We will be using Slido for all Q&A throughout the event.
- The forum will be recorded and made available with slides after the event concludes.



Slido.com
Code: LMF25

Continuing Conversations Online

Lianna will be joining the online break-out room named Continuing Conversations in tomorrow's 15-minute break at:

- 2.00pm NZST
- 12.00pm AEST
- 11.30am ACST
- 10.00am AWST.



Lessons Management Forum 2025

DAY 2 | 21 May 2025

Lessons Management Award



Lessons Management Award Finalists

*SASES Lessons Management Framework and
Lessons Management Board*
South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES)

*Western Australia Lessons Management
Community of Practitioners*
Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)

*Gold Coast Disaster and Emergency
Management Lessons Program*
City of Gold Coast

*Community-centred Tenterfield Post-Bushfire
Learning Review*
Fire to Flourish, Monash University

*Fire and Emergency New Zealand's Lessons
Management Policy, Framework, and
supporting initiatives*
Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)

Lessons Management Award Winner

Congratulations to:

*Application of AIDR Lessons Management Approach to the DFES
Cultural Fire Program*

The Cultural Fire Program at Bushfire Centre of Excellence,
Department of Fire and Emergency Services

Award Winner Presentation

Application of AIDR Lessons Management Approach to the DFES Cultural Fire Program

Peter Galvin

Department of Fire and Emergency Services, WA



Application of AIDR Lessons Management approach to the DFES Cultural Fire Program

AFAC & AIDR Lessons Management Forum, May 2025



**First Nations Australians should be aware that this presentation may contain images of deceased persons*

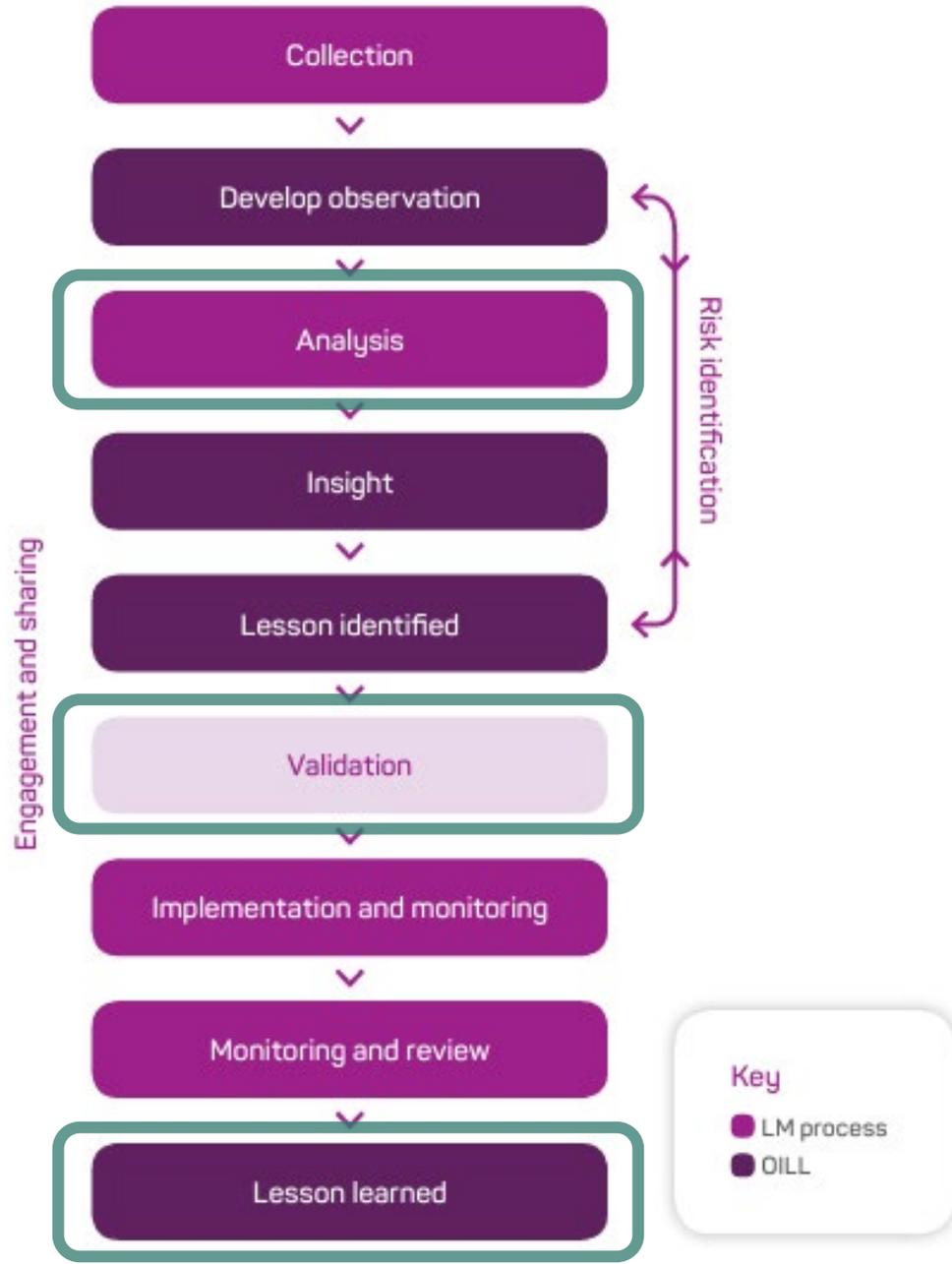


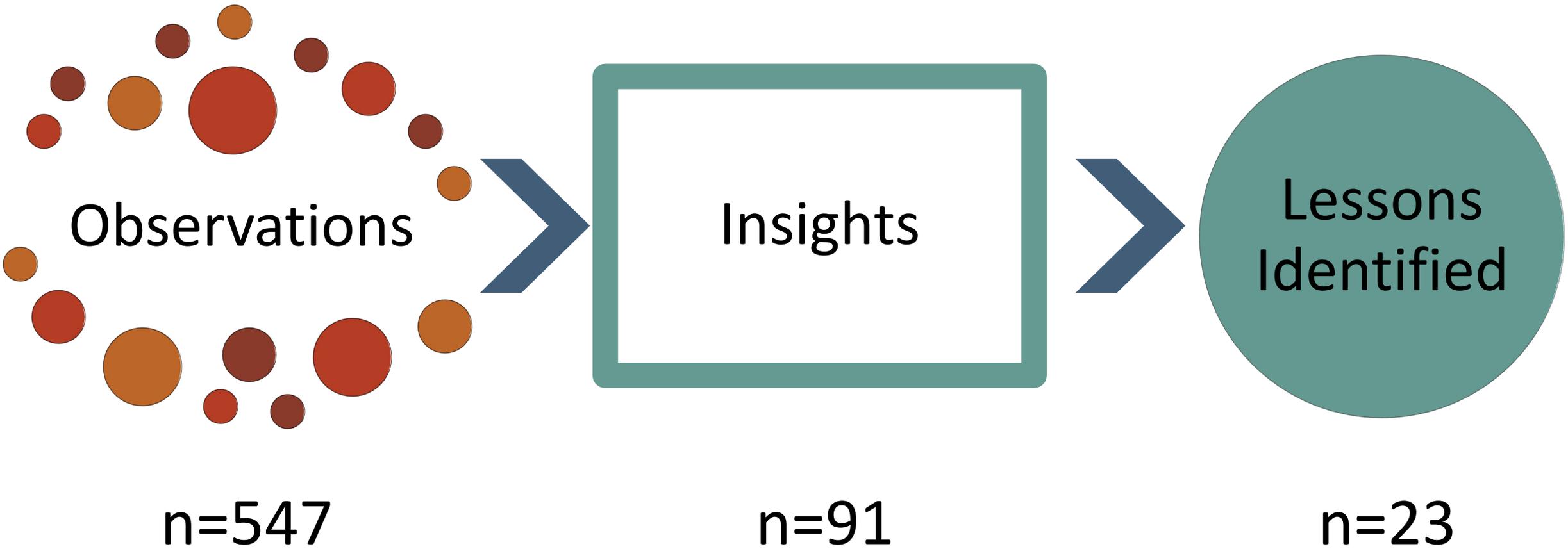
Acknowledging People & Country





Lessons management



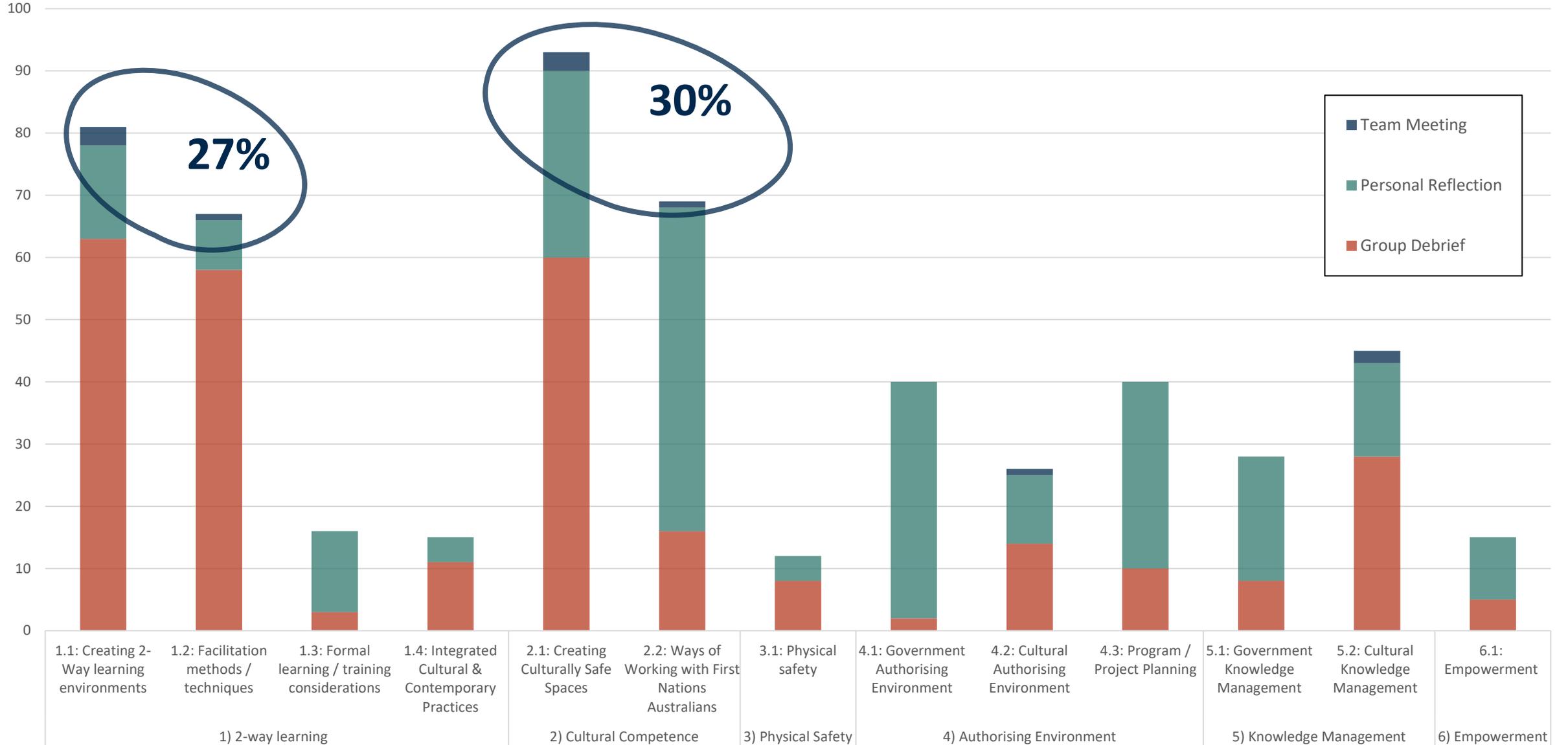


Analysis

Final Coding Framework

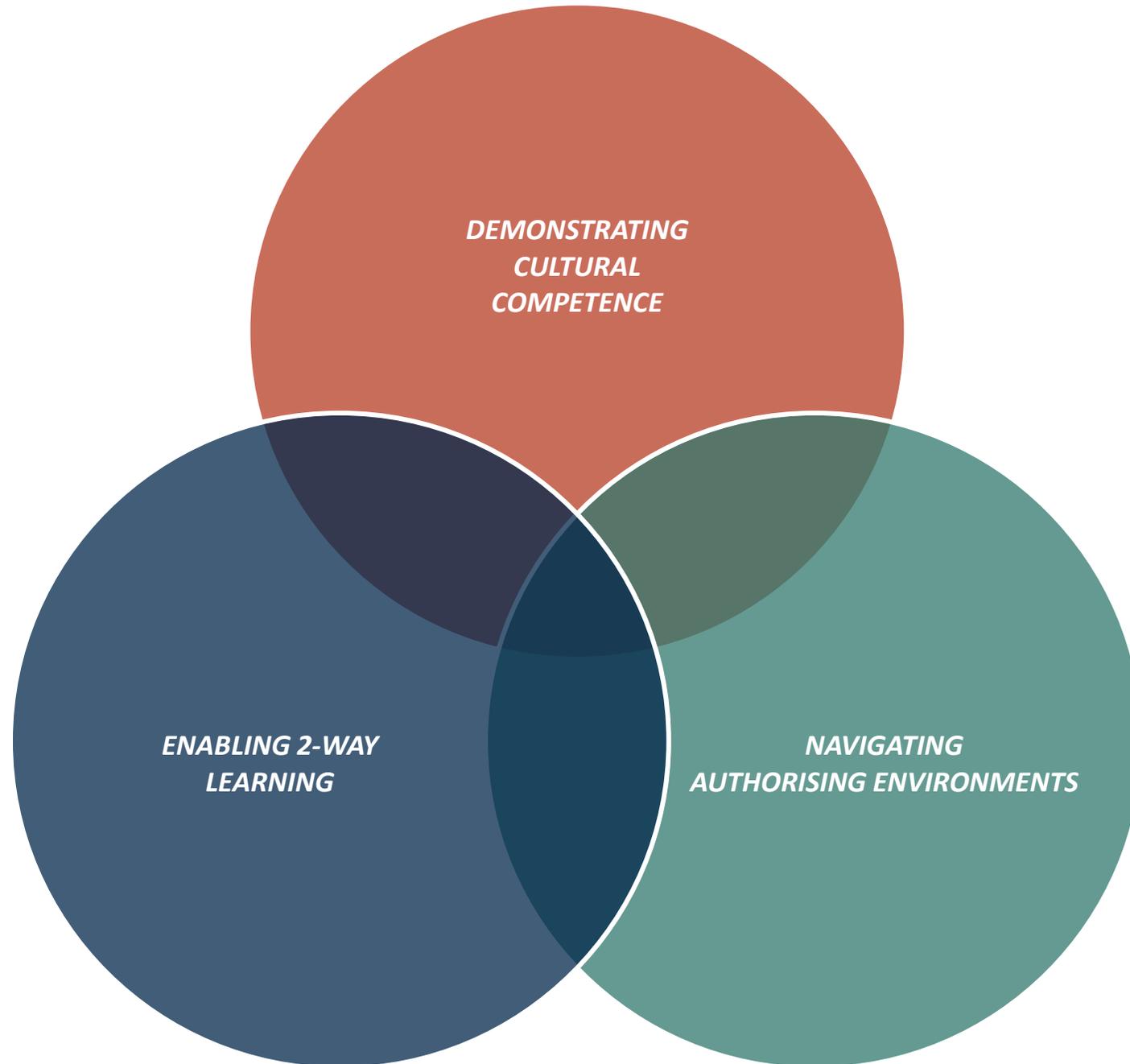
Primary themes (x 6)	Secondary Themes (x 13)	
1) 2-way learning	1.1	<i>Creating 2-Way learning environments</i>
	1.2	<i>Facilitation methods / techniques</i>
	1.3	<i>Formal learning / training considerations</i>
	1.4	<i>Integrated Cultural & Contemporary Practices</i>
2) Cultural competence	2.1	<i>Creating Culturally Safe Spaces</i>
	2.2	<i>Ways of Working with First Nations Australians</i>
3) Physical Safety	3.1	<i>Physical safety</i>
4) Authorising Environment	4.1	<i>Government Authorising Environment</i>
	4.2	<i>Cultural Authorising Environment</i>
	4.3	<i>Program / Project Planning</i>
5) Knowledge Management	5.1	<i>Government Knowledge Management</i>
	5.2	<i>Cultural Knowledge Management</i>
6) Empowerment	6.1	<i>Empowerment</i>

Analysis





Lessons x 23

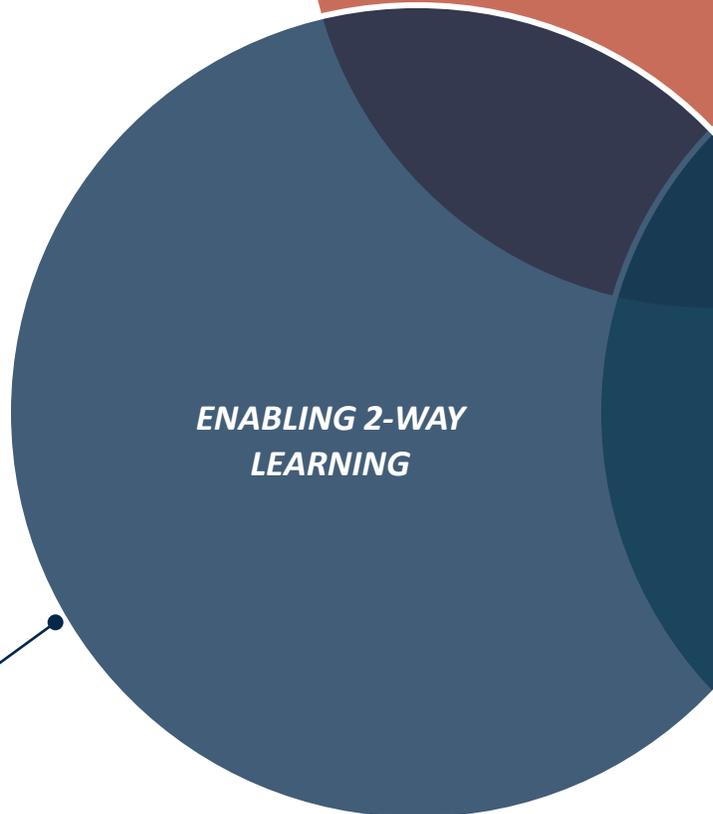




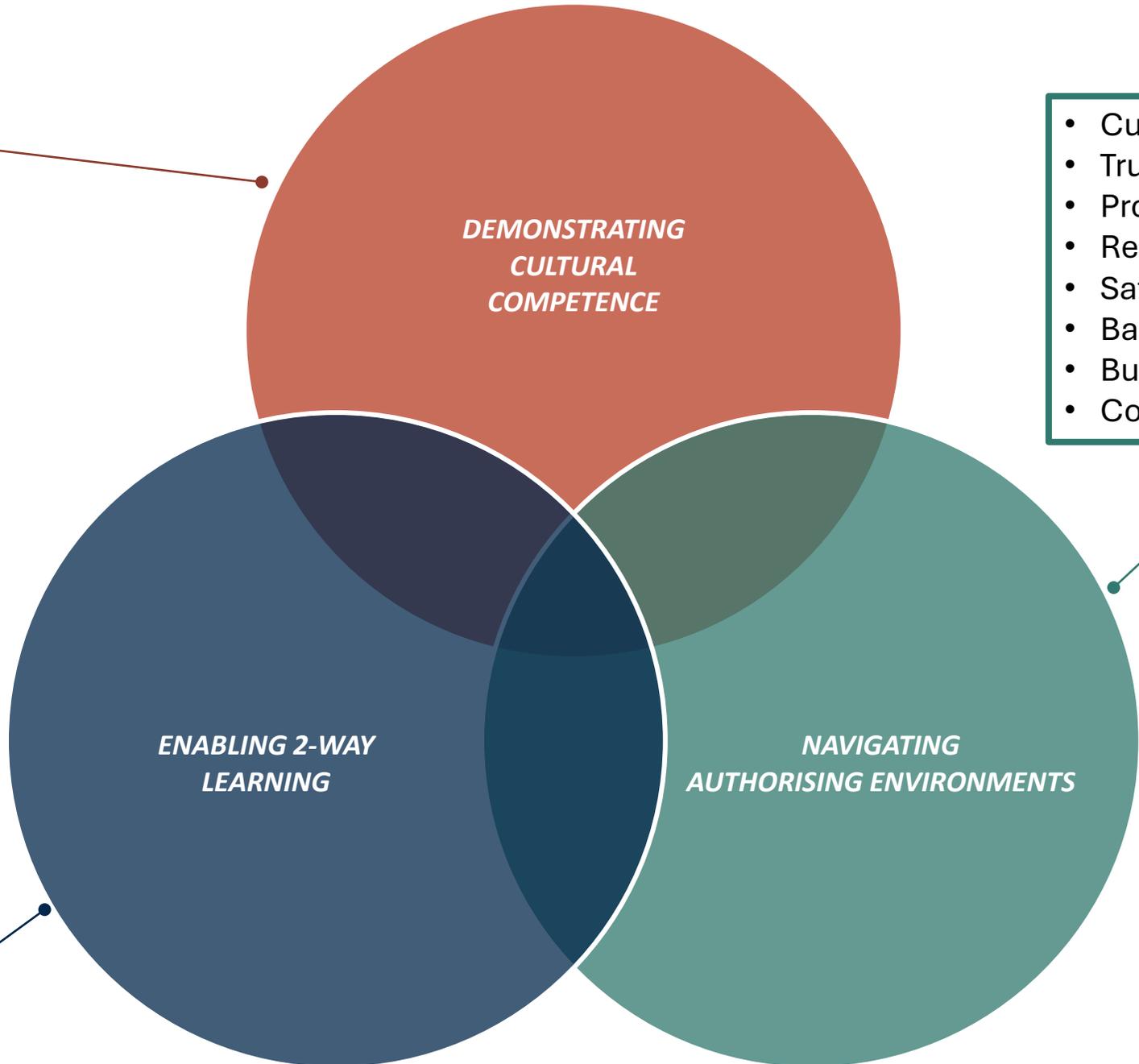
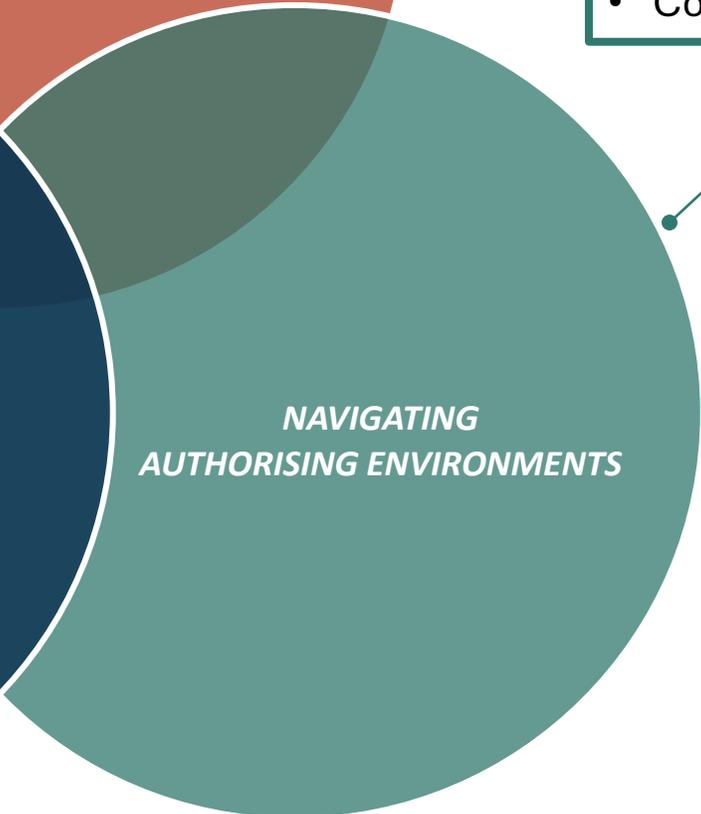
- Self determination
- Cultural competence
- Cultural safety
- Cultural protocols
- Right people
- Role of Elders
- Knowledge sharing



- Cultural authority
- Trust & relationships
- Program delivery
- Resourcing & capability
- Safe work environments
- Barriers to Cultural burning
- Burn governance
- Conflicting obligations



- Facilitating 2-way learning
- Contextualised learning
- Learning consolidation
- Training delivery
- Schedules & structures
- Group work
- Formal training courses

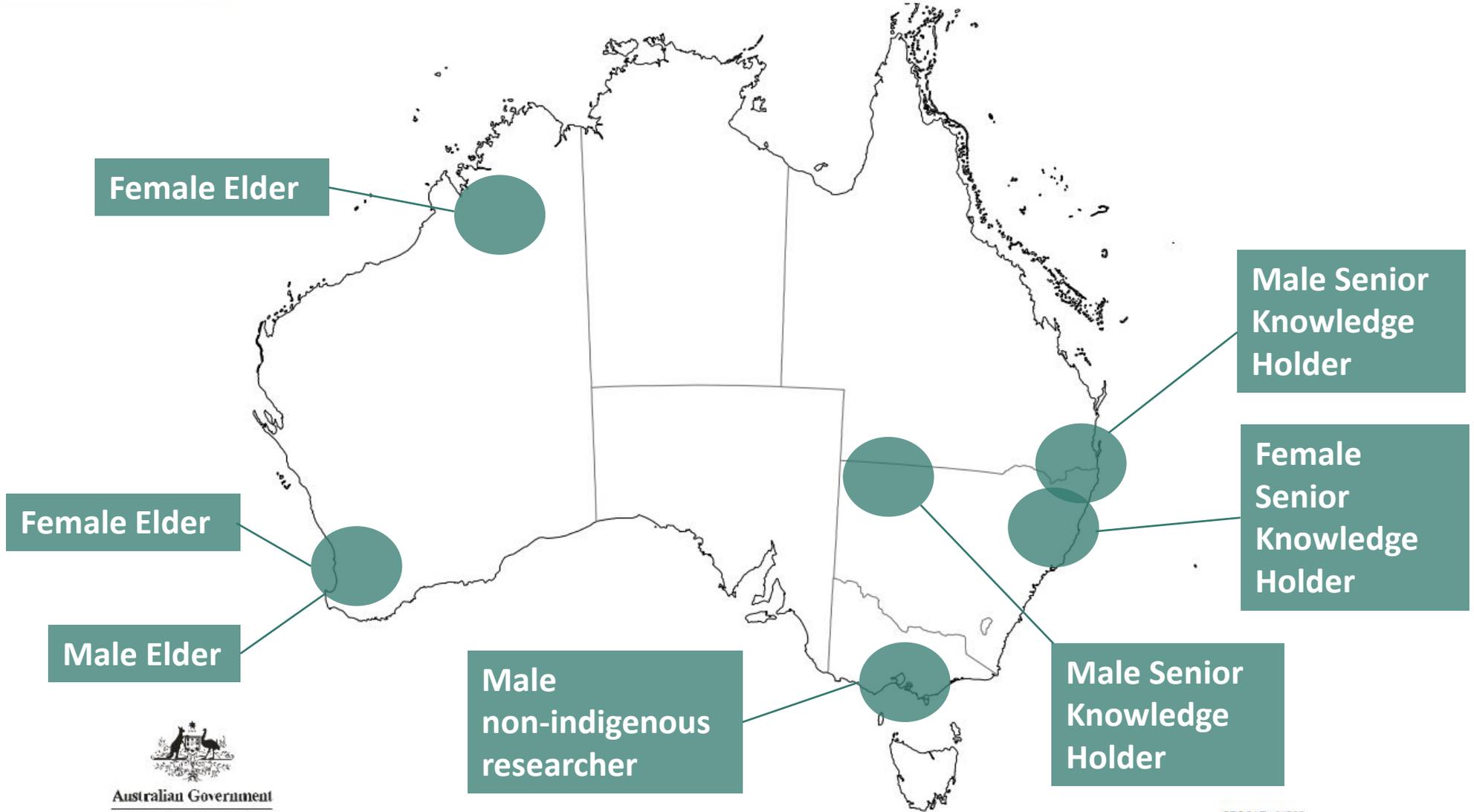


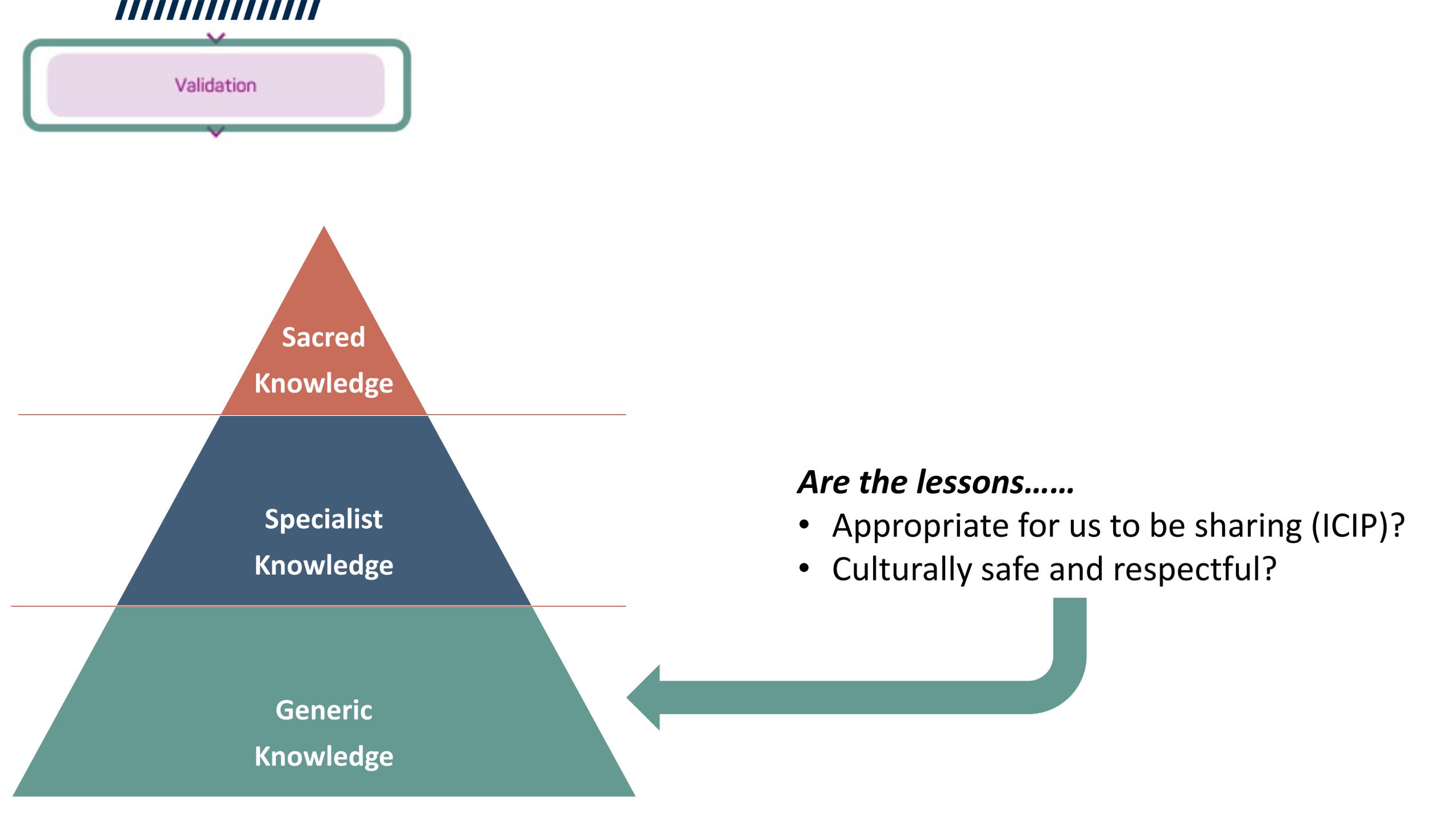
Validation

Indigenous & Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)



Validation





Validation

Sacred
Knowledge

Specialist
Knowledge

Generic
Knowledge

Are the lessons.....

- Appropriate for us to be sharing (ICIP)?
- Culturally safe and respectful?

Lesson learned



2022



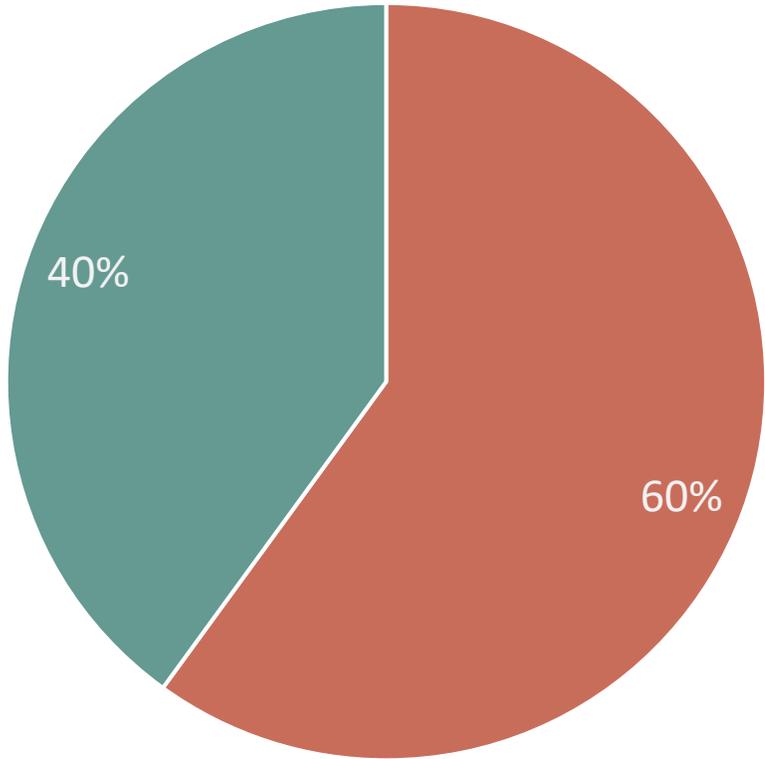
This video can be viewed in the recording of the event.

Lesson learned



Lesson learned

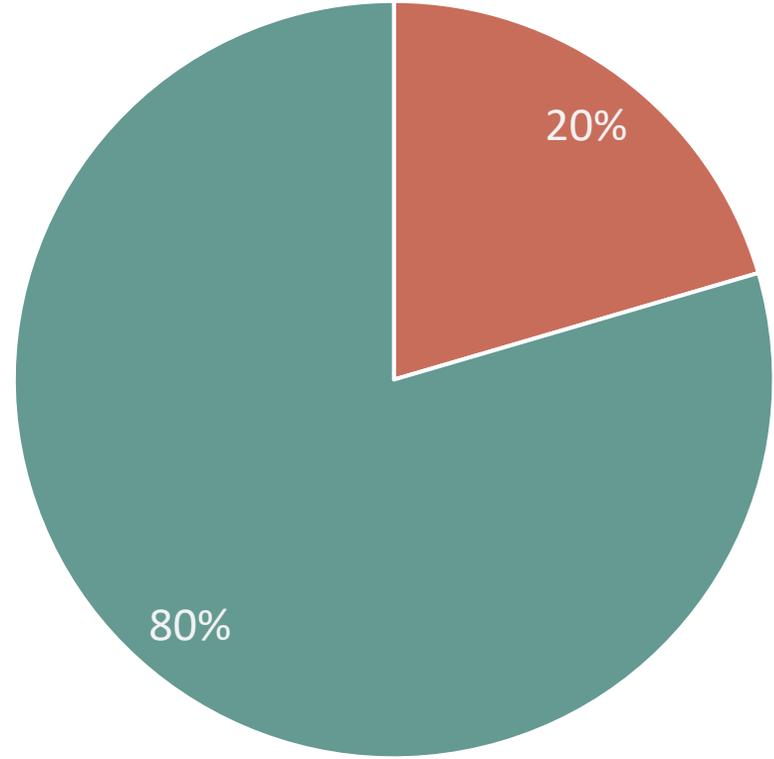
Danju 2022



■ Improve ■ Sustain



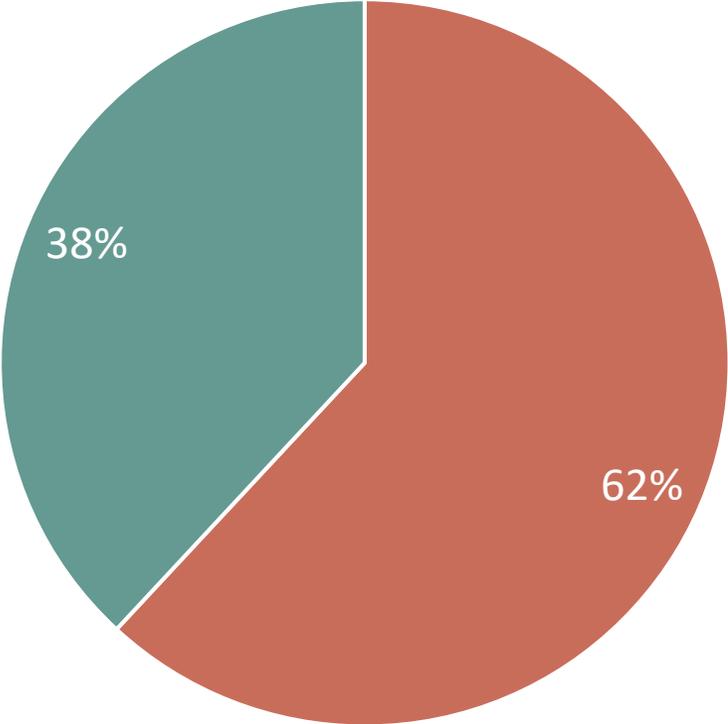
Danju 2023



■ Improve ■ Sustain



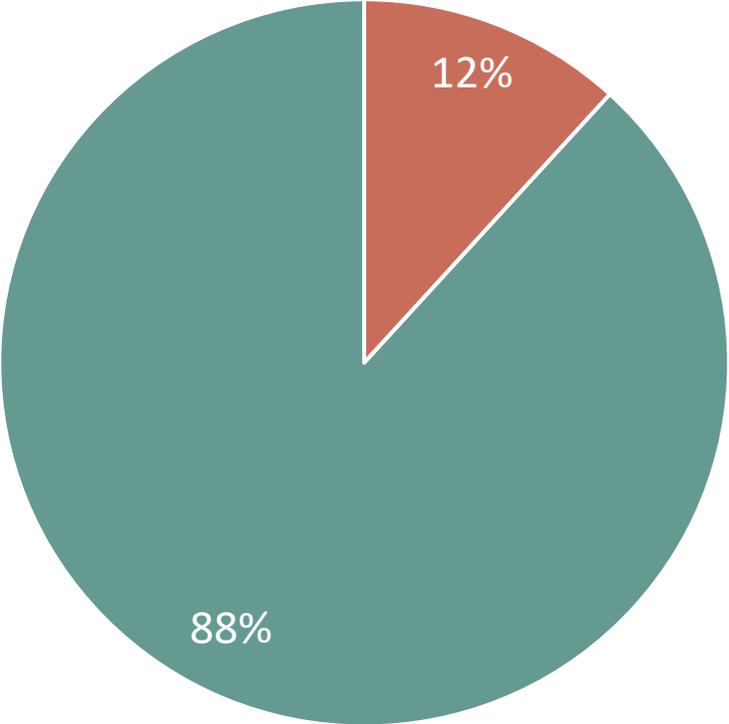
Nowanup 2022



■ Improve ■ Sustain %



Nowanup 2023



■ Improve ■ Sustain %

Lesson learned

Phase Focus

- Focus on nurturing a two-way relationship
- Focus on shared planning and delivery



Planning together in a Yarning Circle on Bindjareb Boodja, May 2024. Photo: Ryan Tate, DFES.



Delivering together on cultural burning with the Danju Rangers, September 2023. Photo: David Windsor, DFES.



2-way learning with rangers, staff and volunteers on Ballardong Boodja, October 2023. Photo: Carol Littlefair, Shire of York.



Due diligence

Understand people, community, culture and Country.



Build foundation

Foster trusting and open relationships.



Plan together

Navigate complexity and identify mutual benefits.



Deliver together

Collective delivery, knowledge sharing and two-way learning.



Future projects

Collaborate to identify future opportunities.

Phase 1

- Identify **Traditional Custodians** to raise your awareness of who they are and learn about their views and perspectives.
- Understand **decision making protocols** and that Indigenous governance requires cultural authority to make decisions.
- Understand that **kinship systems** help identify the right person who holds cultural authority.
- Be familiar with your organisation's role and where or how you can help contribute to First Nation's outcomes.

Phase 2

- Be **available** to accept invitations and offers from Traditional Custodians.
- Genuinely listen, hear and see** what is said and not said.
- Understand the **community's cultural obligations**, priorities and aspirations and how you can contribute.
- Respect **connections** between people and Country.
- Get on Country** and make Country the meeting place.
- Use **actions – not words** to show you are reliable and demonstrating your willingness to act.
- Build trust, respect and understanding** guided by the pace of Traditional Custodians.
- Use **storytelling** for connection and relatability through informal settings like yarning circles, campfires and cups of tea.

Phase 3

- Be **curious** by asking where and how Traditional Custodians want to engage and make decisions.
- Work together** considering both perspectives to achieve shared outcomes.
- Share **knowledge and experiences** to get better outcomes and be willing to compromise.
- Use **your organisation** to identify how resources, time and knowledge might support cultural aspirations.

Phase 4

- Embrace **2-way learning** to maximise knowledge transfer opportunities.
- Adopt **the process and phases** to enable collaborative program delivery.

Phase 5

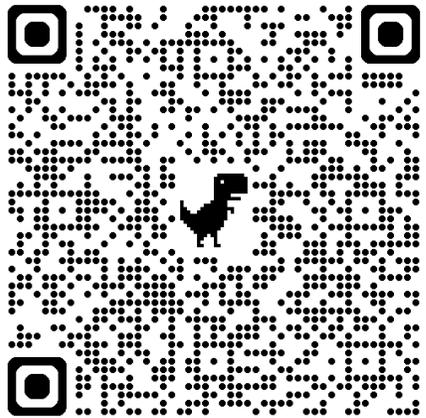
- Strong relationships** that are based on trust will allow future projects to start at phase 3 (not phase 1), fast-tracking further collaborations.
- Celebrate and acknowledge** your shared success and continue investing in the relationship for further mutual outcomes.

Sharing lessons

Thanks!



*DFES Bushfire Centre of Excellence and
Cultural Fire Program*



*Project report & 23 lessons
(Australian Journal Emergency Management)*

Connect:

peter.galvin@dfes.wa.gov.au



Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

Don't forget to add your questions to Slido.
Make sure to select:

- Day 2 | 1.15pm – Lessons Award



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Forum break

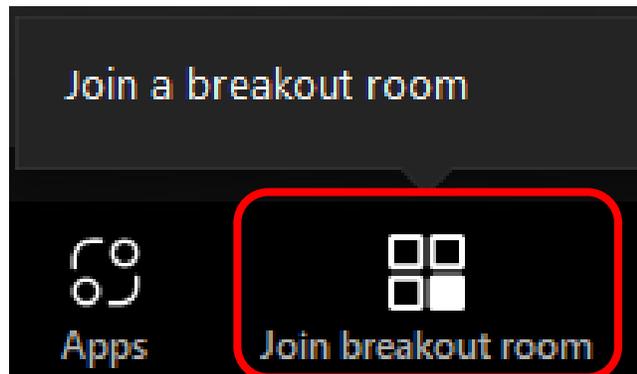
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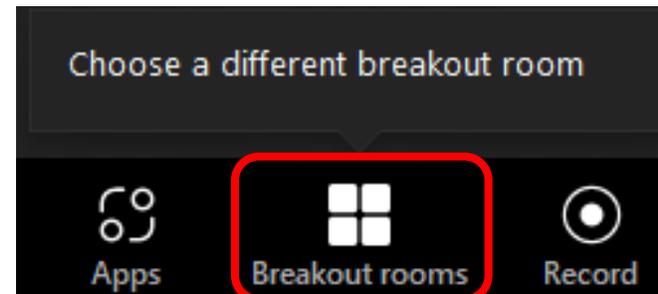
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To return to main presentation room.

2.15pm – Presentation 6

Lessons Management Myths and Legends

Mark Cuthbert

Lessons Management

Myths and Legends



Phone rings...



REMINDER:
WHAT YOU'RE DOING
IS **FREAKIN' HARD.**
GIVE YOURSELF SOME CREDIT.



Lessons Management

Myths and Legends

Myths

are traditional stories

often symbolic and of unknown origin

that explain the origins of a people, phenomena,
or the universe

frequently involving gods, heroes, and
supernatural elements.

Legends

on the other hand

are stories rooted in historical fact

or a past event

often exaggerated or embellished over time

A legend

Is presumed to have some basis in historical fact.

That historical fact morphs into a legend when the truth has been exaggerated to the point that real people or events have taken on a romanticized, "larger than life" quality.

In contrast

a myth

is a type of symbolic storytelling that was never based on fact.

In essence

myths and legends

offer a window into the beliefs, values, and
history of different cultures
through storytelling.

The Meaning of Myths, Folklore, Legends, and Fairy Tales

They cannot all be lumped together as mere fanciful tales

f SHARE

F FLIP

✉ EMAIL

PRINT 

Advertisement



 One common myth that spans multiple cultures is that of a great flood.

Lessons Management

Myths and Legends

The lessons process
is not strategic enough

After Action Reviews /
The lesson process
only look back

We need to be looking forward

Strategic Observations

Observations are opinion / perception

**Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see is a perspective,
not the truth.**

-Marcus Aurelius-



There are
Lessons Identified
and
Lessons Learned

Identified

Learned

Lessons

Denied

Buried

Lost

Forgotten

Transferred

Available

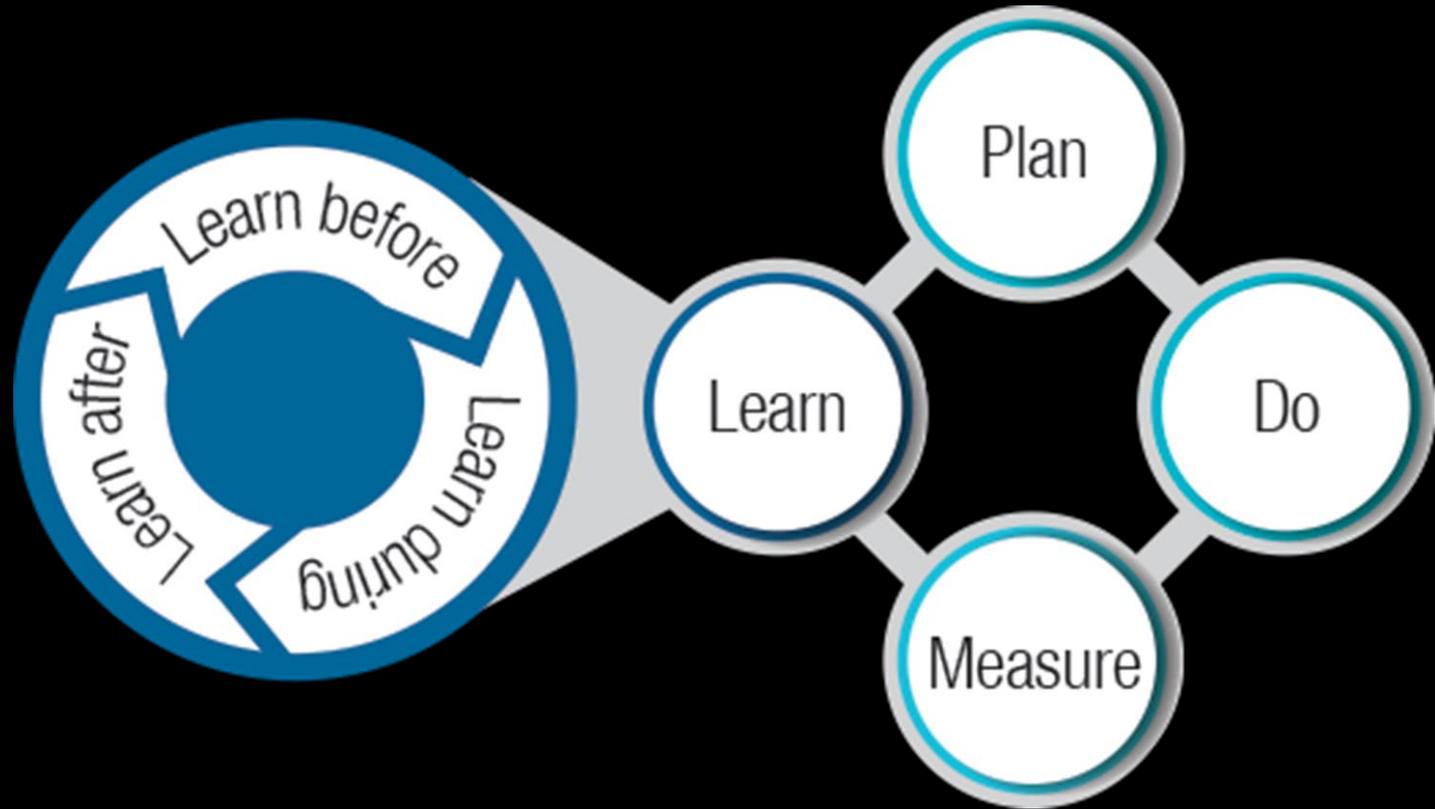
Tacit > Explicit

Anticipated

We only know
what we need to know
when we need to know it

Dave Snowden

Learn
Before
During
And
After



Audience Participation Phase

It is not all bad news

You can do it

JUST DO IT.



You can do it!

- Start small and just do it
- At your team level you can establish a learning culture
- You can collect observations
- you can have the discussions to analyse what they mean
- you can develop insights and
- you can share those learnings

JUST DO IT.



Questions?

**Always make new
mistakes.**

Esther Dyson

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

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Make sure to select:

- Day 2 | 2.15pm – Presentation 6



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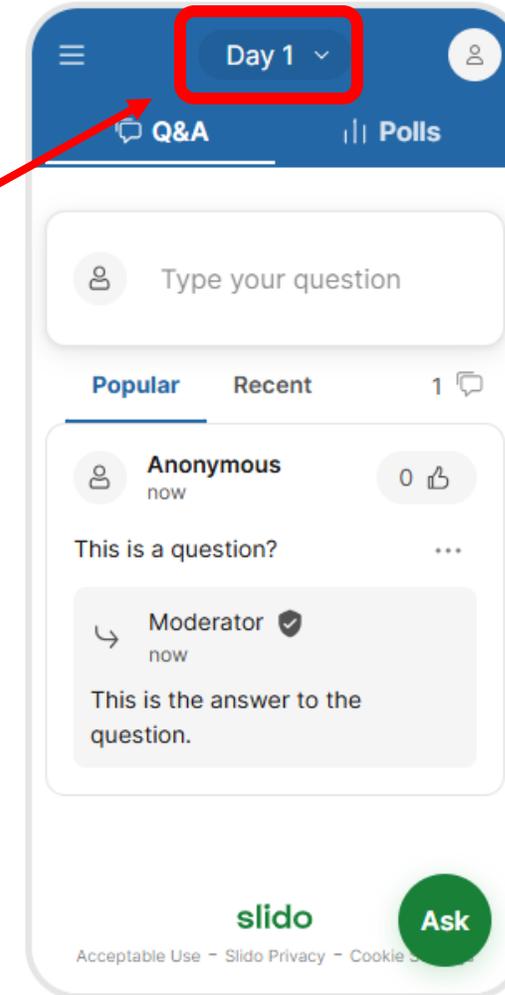
Silver sponsor

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“When will my question be answered?”

- After each presentation, our speakers will go to Slido to finish answering all their questions.
- You can read these answers by clicking on the top bubble and selecting the Day and time of the presentation you are looking for.



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2.45pm – Presentation 7

What's required to move from insights to lessons? Exploring the elements of organisational change

Dr Christine Owen, Dr Tracy Hatton, Jon Mitchell and David Parsons

Response & Recovery Aotearoa New Zealand (RRANZ)

WHAT'S REQUIRED TO MOVE FROM INSIGHTS TO LESSONS?

Exploring the elements of
organisational change

Dr Christine Owen
Dr Tracy Hatton
Jon Mitchell
David Parsons, ESM



MATATŪ MATAORA AOTEAROA
RESPONSE & RECOVERY AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND
DEVELOPING RESPONSE & RECOVERY LEADERS

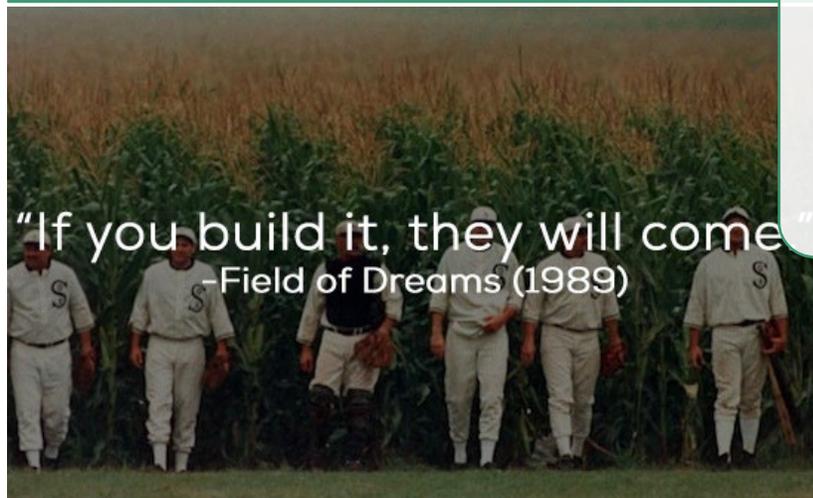
Insights from literature on implementing lessons

The creation myth



“I’ve had an insight so I have ‘learned’ (and everyone else has too)”

Build it and they will come



“All we need is the database and learning will come”

Ground-hog day



“Why do we keep making the same mistakes?”

“... fixing the weak links in the lessons learning cycle requires that agencies have a deeper understanding of how to learn.”



.... and a need to better understand the elements of organisational change

Elements of organisations



Environmental factors and drivers impacting on the institution

Explicit institutional choices about what needs to change and what needs to remain

Organisational structure

Structures to achieve outcomes

Organisational culture

Behaviour and practices in the workplace

Human capital

Effective use of people resources

Systems and processes

Systems and processes to deliver policy, services and regulation

Employment conditions

Performance Management
Workforce planning
Recruitment and retention
Learning and development



Elements of organisations

Environmental factors and drivers impacting on the institution

Explicit institutional choices about what needs to change and what needs to remain

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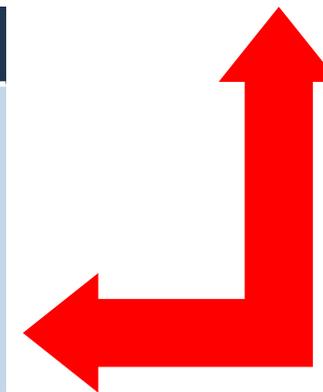
Effective use of people resources

Systems and processes

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Employment conditions

Performance Management
Workforce planning
Recruitment and retention
Learning and development



Organisational change framework

- A structured framework or guide that organisations use to manage and implement changes more effectively.
- They provide a roadmap for navigating the transition process, helping to ensure that changes are adopted smoothly and successfully.



Organisational change

01



CREATE a sense of urgency

02



BUILD a guiding coalition

03



FORM a strategic vision

04



ENLIST a volunteer army

05



ENABLE action by removing barriers

06



GENERATE short-term wins

07



SUSTAIN acceleration

08



EMBED change

Adapted from Kotter, 2021



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DEVELOPING RESPONSE & RECOVERY LEADERS

Organisational change – Step 1

01



CREATE a
sense of
urgency

Modelled scenarios		Likelihood in next 50 years	Modelled building/ infrastructure losses	Likely consequences
 Auckland volcanic eruption		10%	\$5bn-\$65bn (buildings only)	Potential full evacuation of Auckland City, with only days to week's warning.
 Taranaki eruption	Small eruption	30%	~\$1bn	Similar size to 1995-96 Ruapehu eruptions. Impacts dominated by ashfall and lahars; evacuations likely.
	Large eruption	1%	\$10bn-\$15bn	Similar size to 1886 Tarawera eruption. Likely severe impacts to oil/gas production and farming sector; mass evacuation probable.
 Hikurangi subduction zone earthquake and tsunami	M8+	25%	~\$10bn-\$20bn	Strong and long ground shaking for east coast of North Island, and large tsunami produced.
	M9.1	1%	\$144bn (buildings only)	Catastrophic scenario. Est. potential fatalities >20,000 (tsunami).
 Ruapehu / Tongariro / Ngauruhoe / Whakaari ash producing eruption		Almost certain	~\$1bn	Disruption mostly from ashfall to aviation, electricity transmission, and tourism and primary industry sectors.
 Hutt River flood (over stopbank design event)		5%	\$5bn-\$10bn	Hutt city – greatest exposure for any flood plain in New Zealand.
 Wellington Fault M7.5 earthquake		5%	~\$16bn (buildings only)	Likely serious and prolonged damage and disruption to Wellington, including government.
 South American M9+ earthquake & NZ tsunami		25%	~\$5bn (buildings only)	Large exposure for eastern coast of New Zealand, especially Christchurch City/Canterbury
 Alpine fault – M8 earthquake		75%	~\$10bn	High-probability event, extensive co-seismic landslides will compound impacts.

Organisational change – Step 2

02



BUILD a
guiding
coalition

Organisational change – Step 3

03



FORM a
strategic
vision

Organisational change – Steps 4-8

04



ENLIST a
volunteer
army

05



ENABLE
action by
removing
barriers

06



GENERATE
short-term
wins

07



SUSTAIN
acceleration

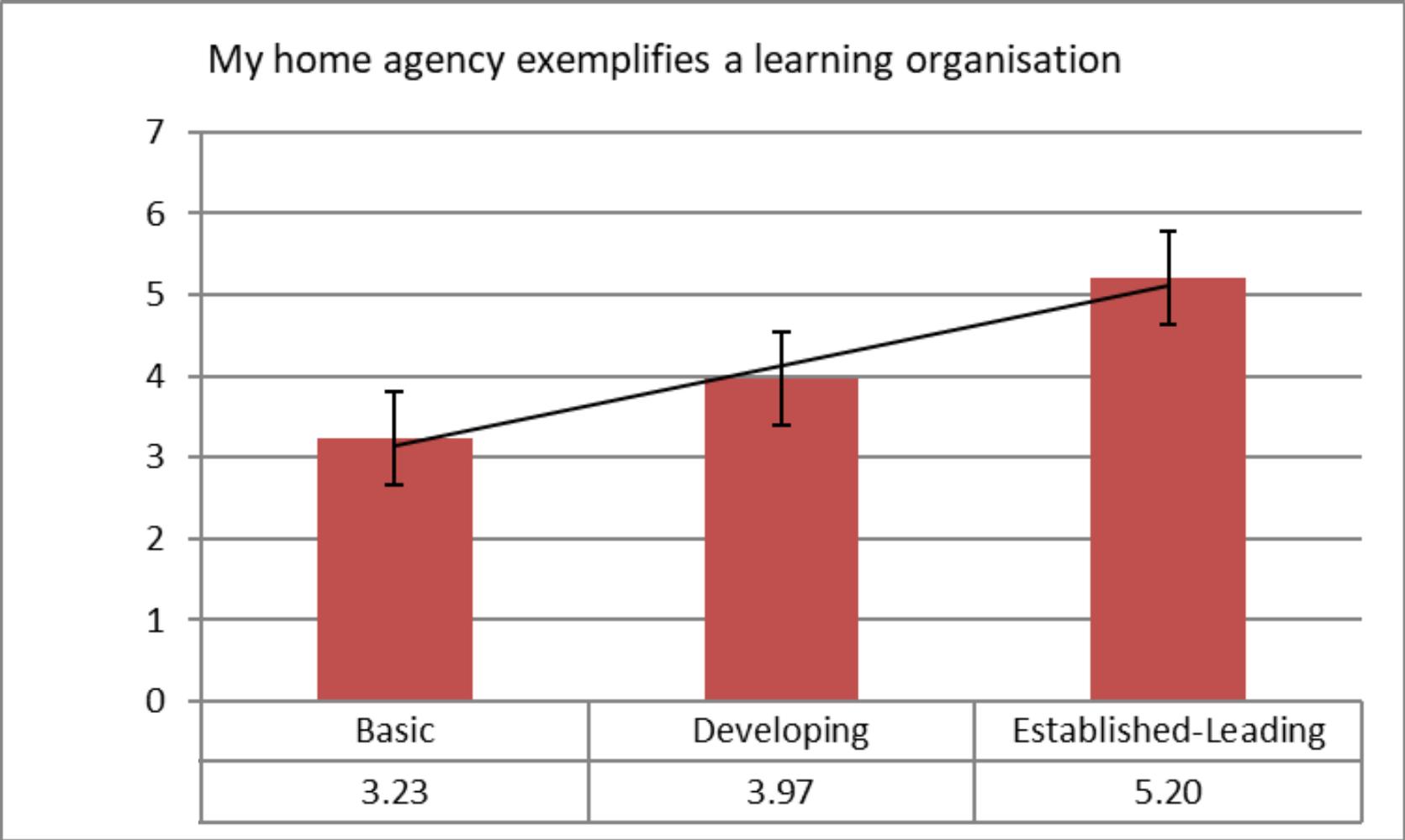
08



EMBED
change

What do we know about how
some organisations
successfully implement
insights and move towards
lessons learned?





Owen, C., Krusel, N., & Bethune, L. (2022). Assessing models of research utilisation for emergency management practice. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 31(4), 423-442.



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DEVELOPING RESPONSE & RECOVERY LEADERS

Maturity in implementing lessons

BASIC:
individual effort

“the onus is on individuals maintaining an interest”

DEVELOPING:
some processes/ experience

“people can access a portal”

ESTABLISHED/LEADING:
job roles; governance

“active analysis and sense-making; part of job roles and committees of review”

When organisations have a BASIC maturity in learning



“passionate individuals who keep us updated through emails”

When organisations have a DEVELOPING maturity in learning

Organisational structure

Structures to achieve outcomes

Organisational culture

Behaviour and practices in the workplace

Human capital

Effective use of people resources

Systems and processes

Systems and processes to deliver policy, services and regulation

“we have a committee of review”

reactive- “some processes to push insights out”



When organisations have An ESTABLISHED/LEADING maturity in learning

Organisational structure

Structures to achieve outcomes

“ensuring observations are reviewed by key decision makers and implications discussed”

Organisational culture

Behaviour and practices in the workplace

“we take the observations and insights and use them to transform our practice”

Human capital

Effective use of people resources

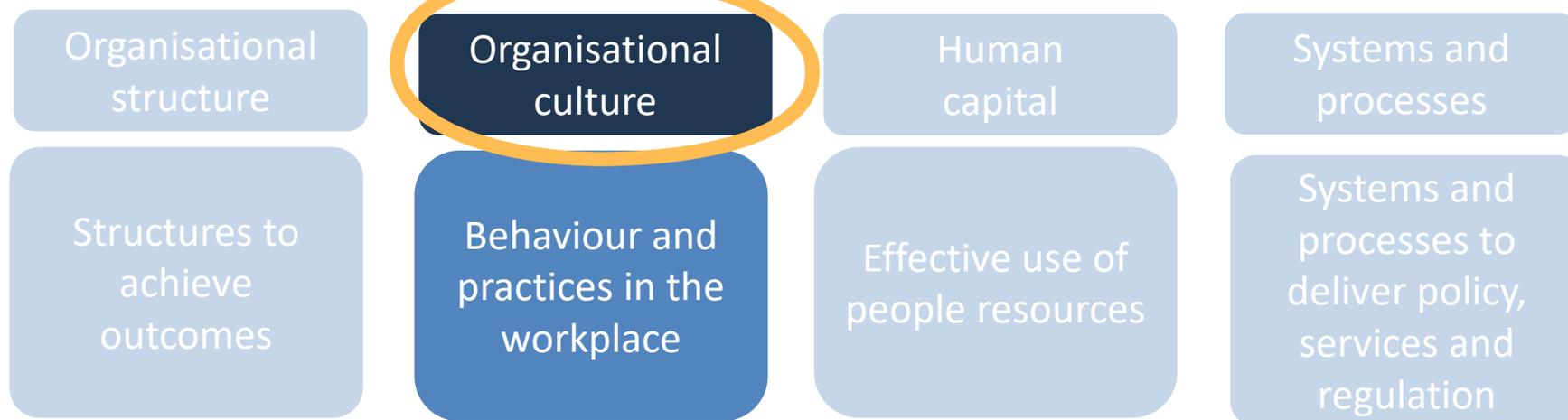
“people have lessons management in their job roles”

Systems and processes

Systems and processes to deliver policy, services and regulation

“systems of observations and insights constantly updated and monitored”

When organisations have An ESTABLISHED/LEADING maturity in learning



“we take the observations and insights and use them to transform our practice”

Individual change framework



ADKAR



Kotter



And finally... organisational change through professional development – the Response and Recovery Aotearoa New Zealand Leadership Development programme

“I used to think my role was to keep the lights on, but now I’ve taken on the skills learned in the course into my BAU role, which has resulted in an uplift of general capability for my team and increased our influence in cross-agency collaboration.”

RRANZ: <https://rranz.org.nz/>



Thank you



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RESPONSE & RECOVERY AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

DEVELOPING RESPONSE & RECOVERY LEADERS

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

Don't forget to add you questions to Slido.

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3.15pm – Presentation 8

Demonstrating Continuous Improvement Using Real Time Learning

Lee Dalglish

Emergency Management Victoria



Download the
Delegate Handbook

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

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- Day 2 | 3.15pm – Presentation 8



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Afternoon tea break

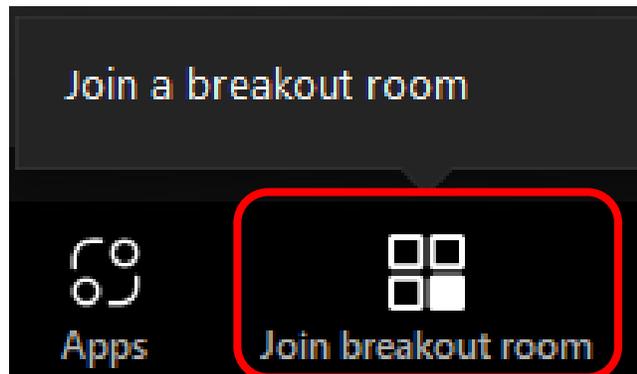
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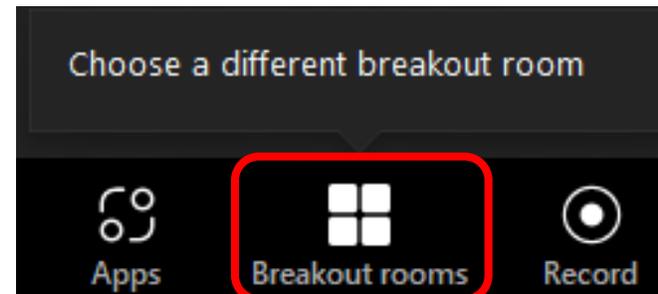
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4.15pm – Presentation 9

Lessons From 2022 and 2023 NSW Flooding – Improving Service Delivery and Community Preparedness

Heather Stuart

NSW State Emergency Service

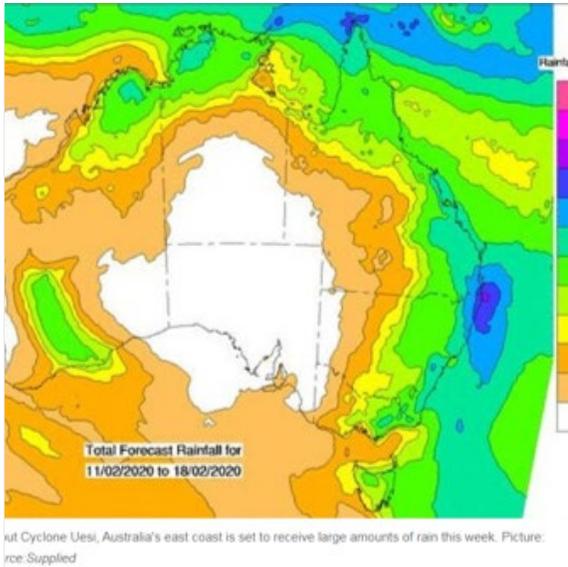
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Learning Lessons from NSW Flooding 2022 - 2023

The Precursor

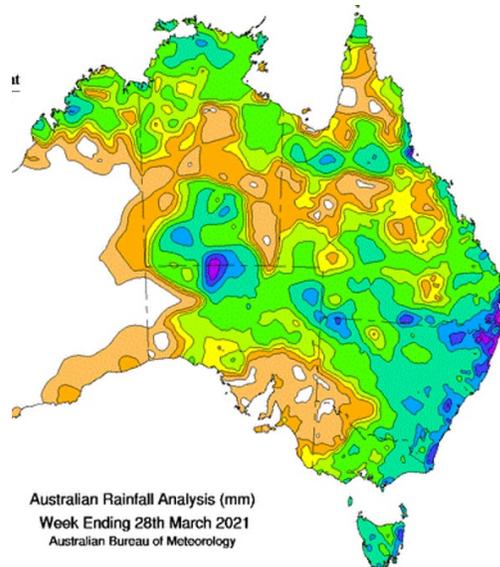
01

3 years of flooding



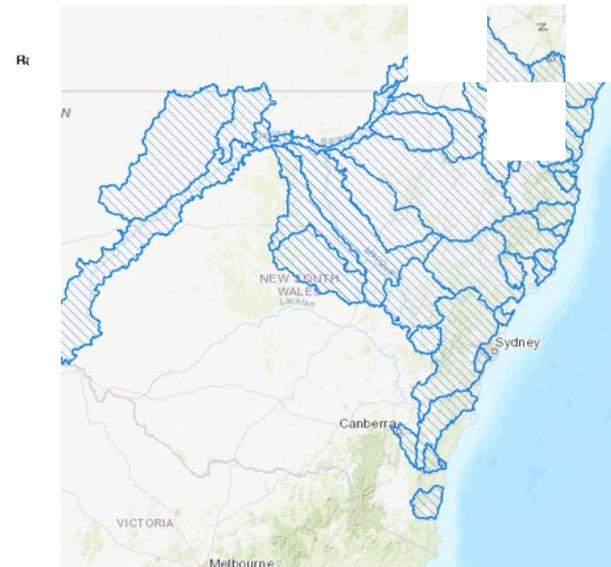
February 2020

3 weather systems in 1 month, including Cyclone Uesi



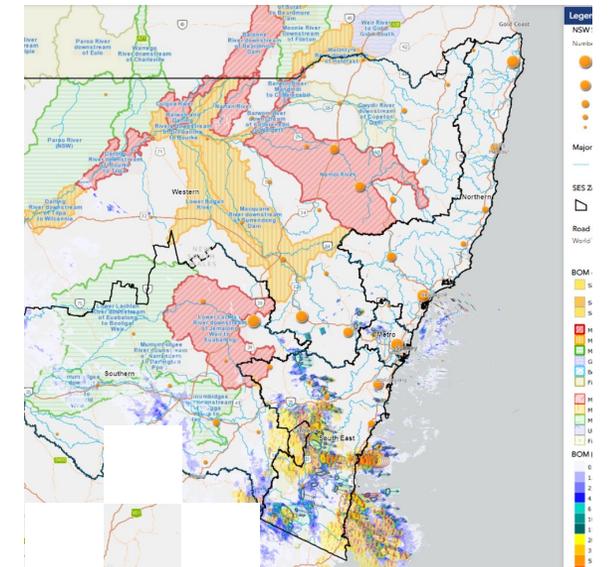
March – June 2021

Record level rainfall in multiple areas
Record level flooding in a number of locations



March - June 2021

Over 1,000 flood rescue activations



Nov 21 – Feb 22

Operations wrapped up 2 days before the next system hit

AAR Programs

2020 Internal AAR

12 lessons

24 recommendations

2021 AFAC Independent Review

20 lessons

28 recommendations

2021 Process Improvement Report

9 lessons

27 Recommendations



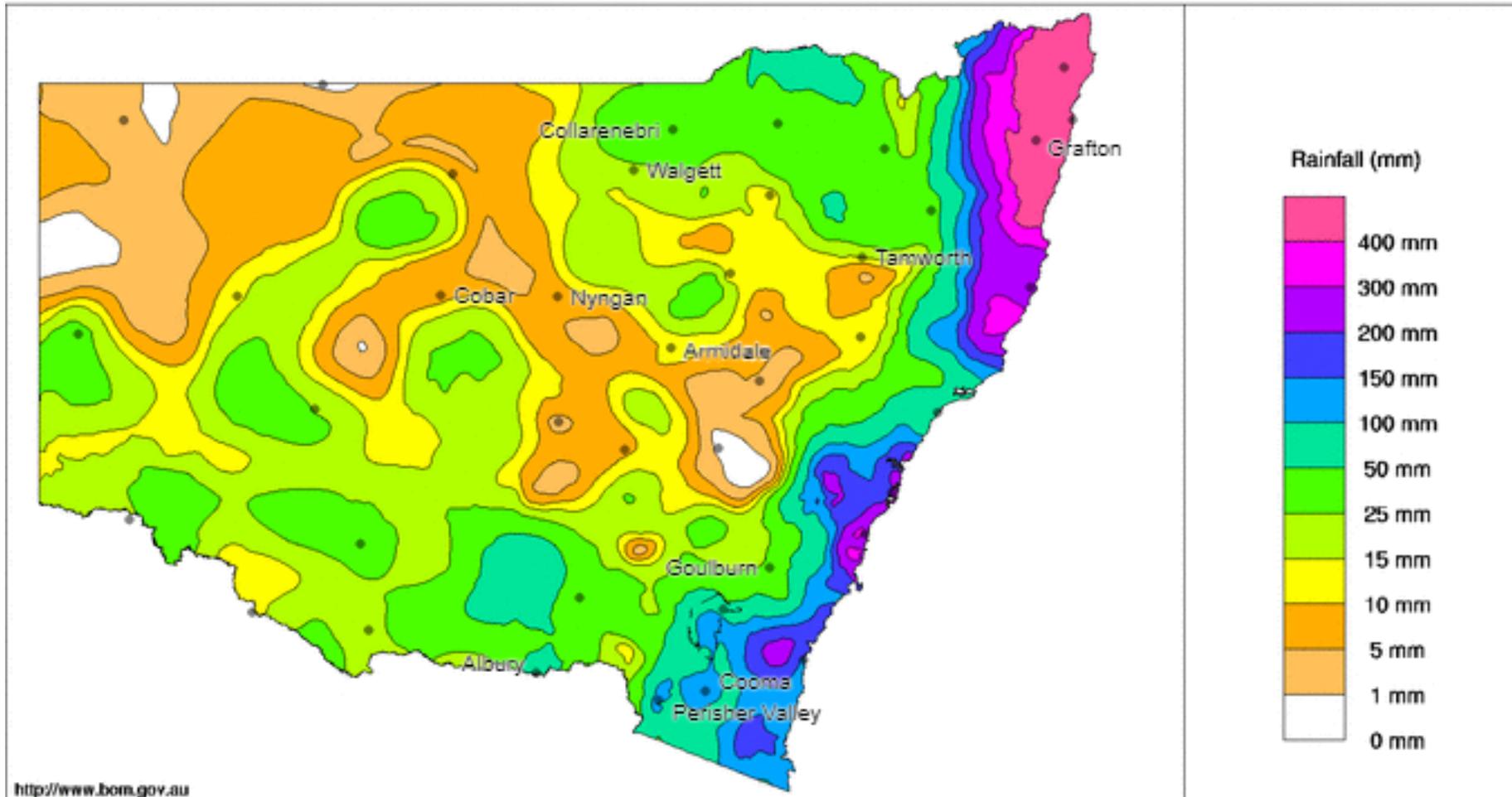
\$137M

Welcome 2022 & 2023

02

February - March 2022

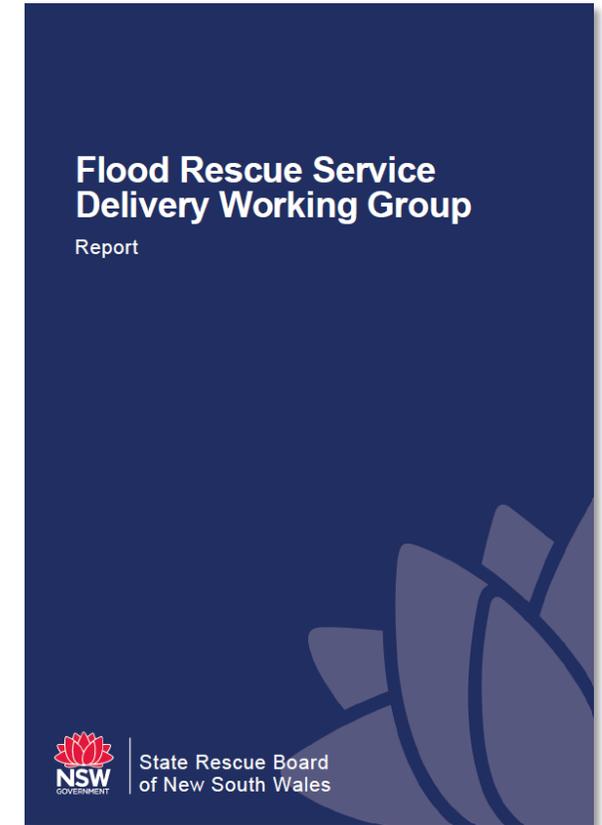
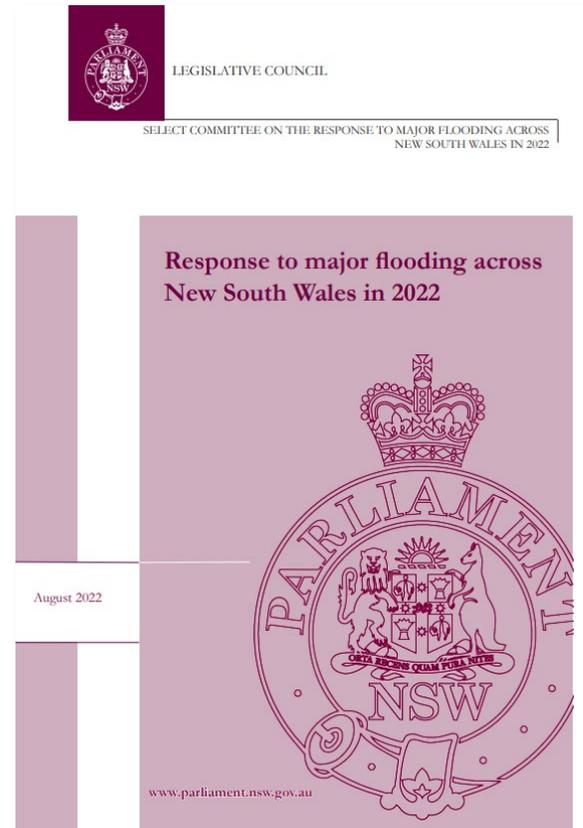
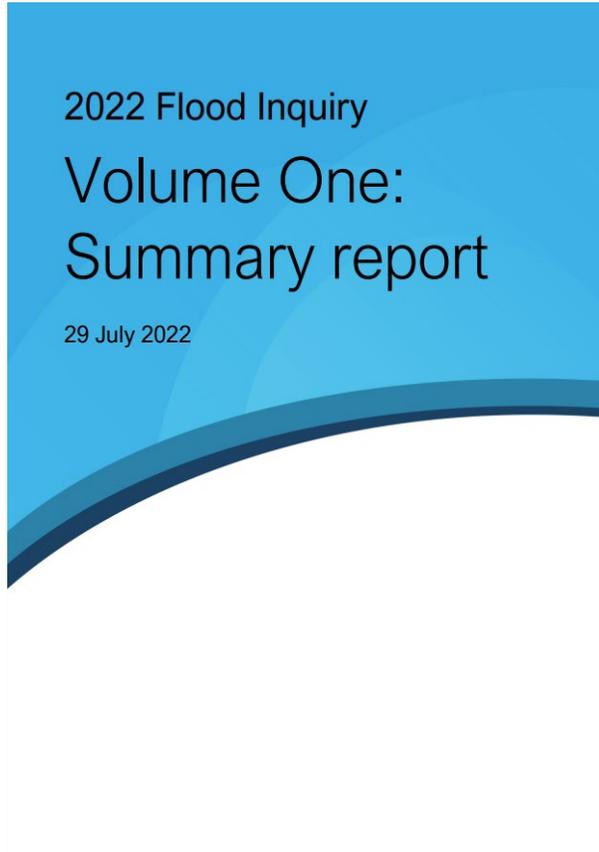
New South Wales Rainfall Totals (mm) Week Ending 2nd March 2022
Australian Bureau of Meteorology



<http://www.bom.gov.au>



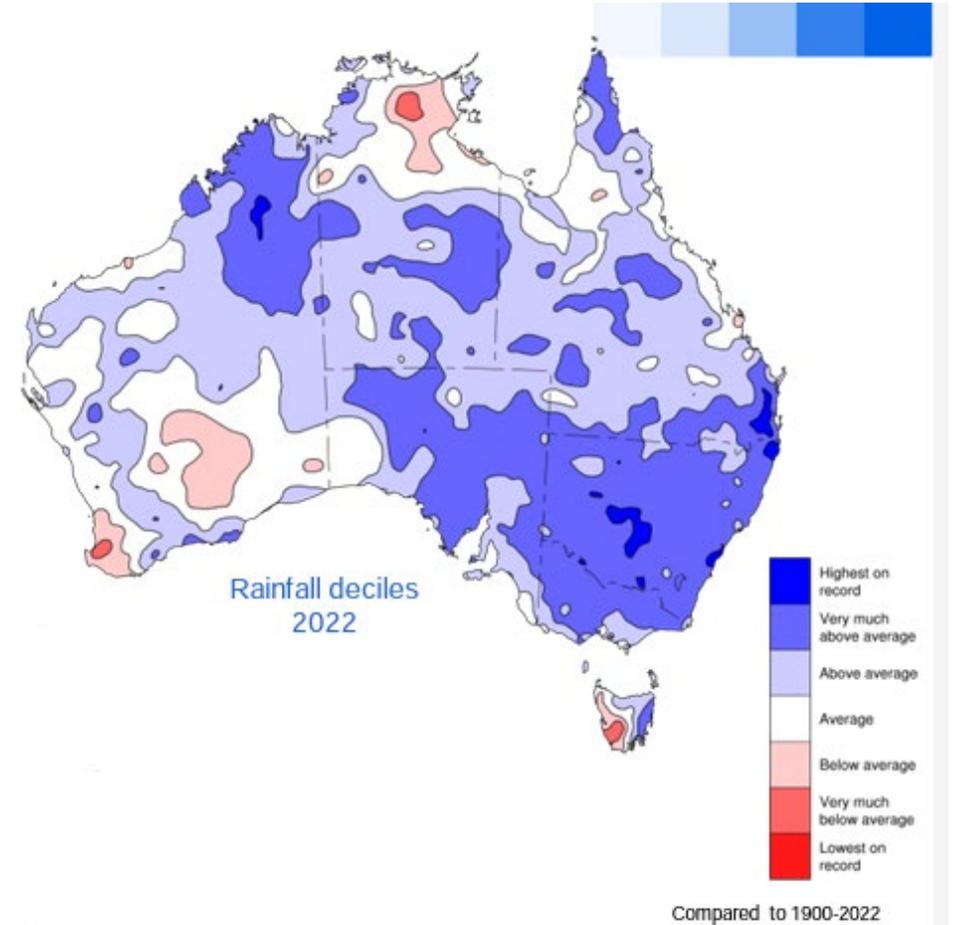
External Inquiries & Reviews



\$89M

August 2022 - March 2023

- 3rd consecutive La Nina
- 9th wettest year on record
- 218 days of continuous flood operations



Internal AAR Program

2022 AARs

- 4,400 observations
- 44 lessons & 54 recommendations
- 7 x recurring lessons

2023 AARs

- 2,370 observations
- 17 new lessons & 23 recommendations
- 5 x recurring lessons



Operational Improvement and Lessons Team
Operational Capability and Training
NSW State Emergency Service

By 2023 - Evidence of Learning Occurring



Areas of Positive Performance

- Effective span of control established
- Value of effective Liaison Officers
- Interagency support and interoperability
- Value of embedded meteorologist/hydrologist
- Benefits of a nationally consistent public information system
- Impact of new equipment/technology
- Intelligence gathering using new and expanding capabilities
- Value of Air Operations Manager role



Areas to improve

Incident Management

- Situational appreciation and planning
- Understanding and application of divisions/sectors
- Briefings and communication
- Operational reporting
- Strategic aviation management
- Timely sharing of intelligence collected through aviation assets

Command & Control

- Doctrine
- Supporting senior leaders at State Emergency Operations Centre

Operations

- Flood rescue coordination
- Operational model of State Operations Centre
- Centralised radio operations
- Location of airbase manager
- Use of RPAS during floods
- Coordination of spontaneous volunteers

Public Information

- Engagement of broadcast media
- Social media tools
- Media talent
- Public facing website is not fit for purpose

Areas to improve

Relief & Recovery

- Transition to relief and recovery unclear
- Challenges with processes for requests for relief & recovery

NSW Emergency Management Arrangements

- Activation of Emergency Operations Centres
- Appropriateness and operation of evacuation centres

Interstate, Interagency & International Operations

- Standardisation of terminology for emergency services
- Internal process for activation of National Resource Sharing Centre
- Inconsistency in rapid damage assessment

Areas to improve

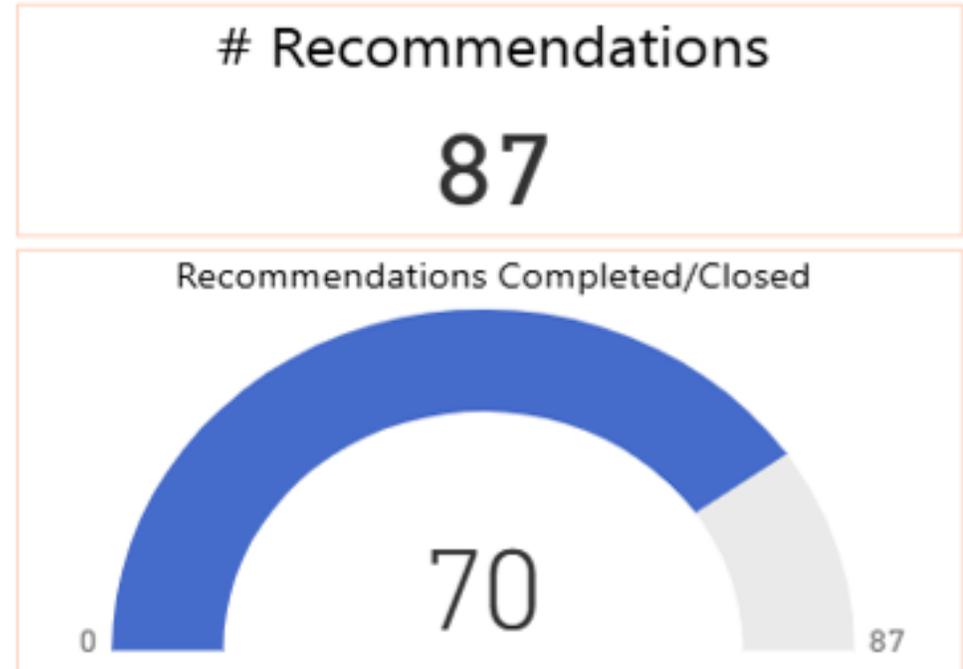
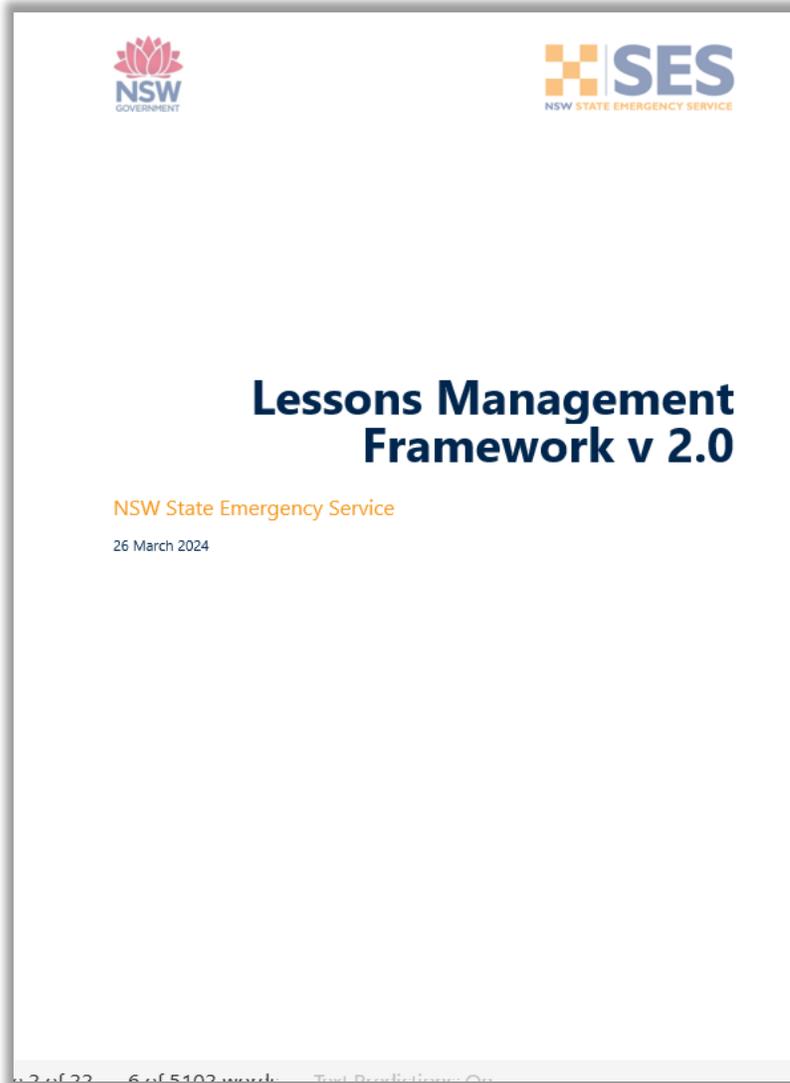
Resources: Capability & Capacity

- Intelligence capability & capacity
- Flood rescue capacity
- Lack of trained, competent & current personnel
- Resource levels in the State Operations Centre
- Aviation capabilities for flood and storm
- Lack of strategic and operational exercising for flooding

Member Safety

- Mental health and wellbeing of members
- Fatigue management procedure
- Lack of decontamination processes

Moving from Identifying to Learning Lessons



What have we learned?

Incident Management

- Situational Appreciation and Planning ✓
- Understanding and application of divisions/sectors ✓
- Briefings and communication ✓
- Operational reporting ✓
- Strategic aviation management
- Timely sharing of intelligence collected through aviation assets ✓

Command & Control

- Doctrine ✓
- Supporting senior leaders at State Emergency Operations Centre ✓

Operations

- Flood rescue coordination ✓
- Operational model of State Operations Centre ✓
- Centralised radio operations ✓
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NSW Emergency Management Arrangements

- Activation of Emergency Operations Centres ✓
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- Standardisation of terminology for emergency services
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- Inconsistency in rapid damage assessment ✓

What have we learned?

Resources: Capability & Capacity

- Intelligence capability & capacity ✓
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- Resource levels in the State Operations Centre ✓
- Aviation capabilities for flood and storm ✓
- Lack of strategic and operational exercising for flooding ✓

Member Safety

- Mental health and wellbeing of members ✓
- Fatigue management procedure ✓
- Lack of decontamination processes ✓

Wicked problems?

- Insufficient resourcing for large scale/campaign events
- Fatigue management challenges
- Operational reporting challenges

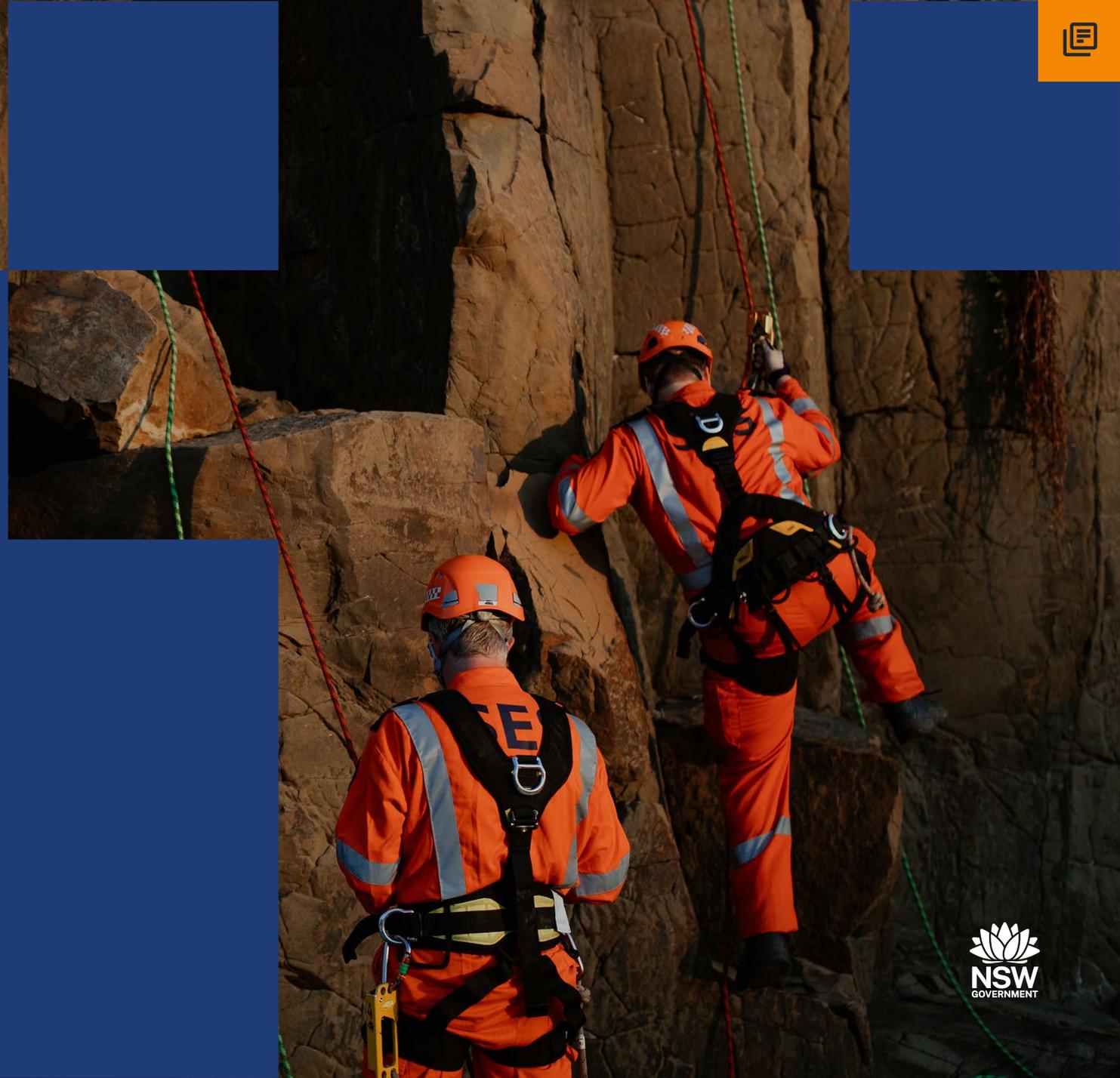


Thank you

Heather Stuart
Manager Operational Improvement & Lessons
NSW State Emergency service

Heather.stuart@ses.nsw.gov.au

Ph +61 439 737 302



Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

Don't forget to add your questions to Slido.

Make sure to select:

- Day 2 | 4.15pm – Presentation 9



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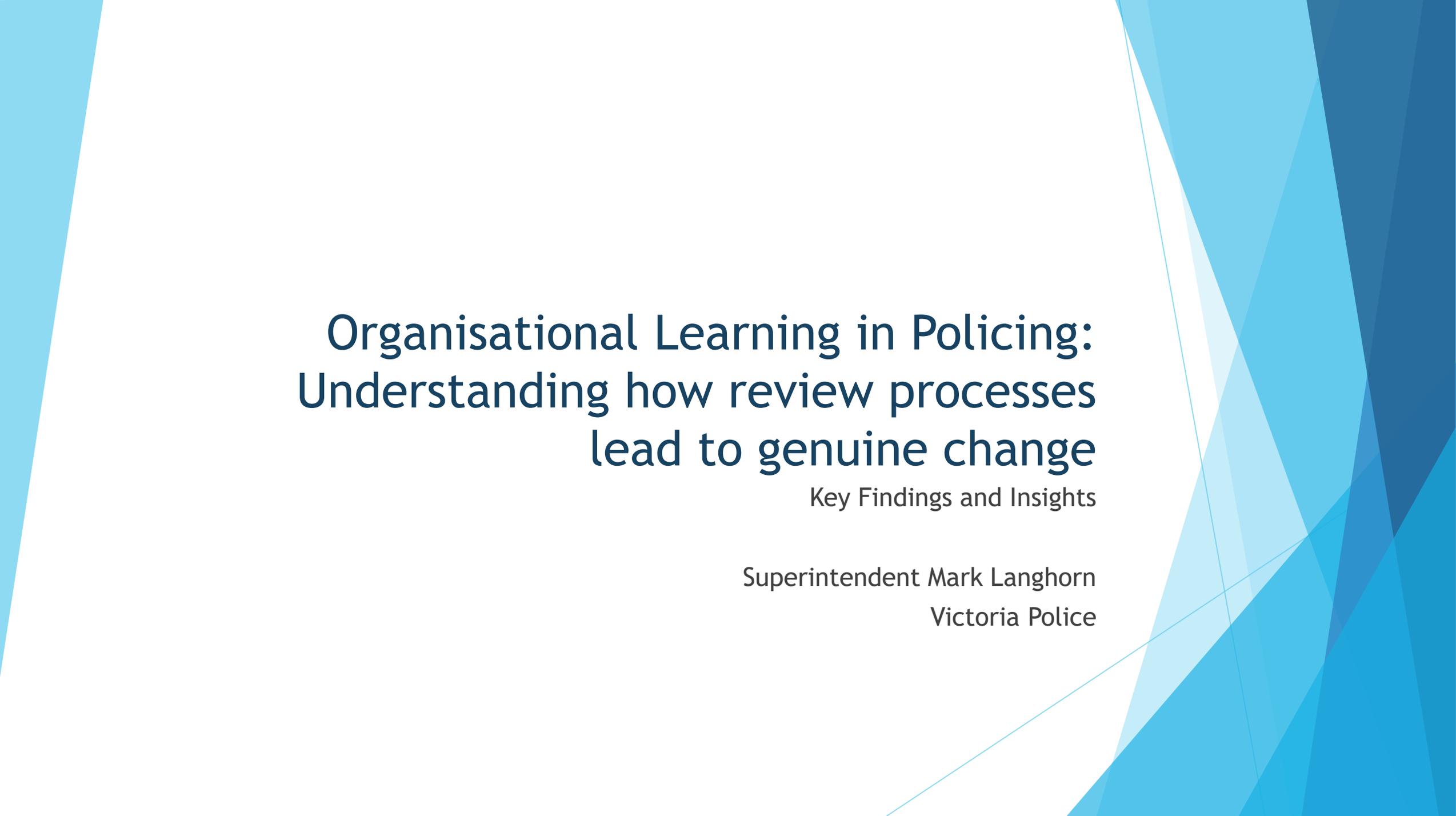
Silver sponsor

4.45pm – Presentation 10

**Organisational learning and operational responses in policing:
understanding how review processes lead to genuine change.**

Superintendent Mark Langhorn

Victoria Police

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The text is centered on a white background that is partially framed by these blue shapes.

Organisational Learning in Policing: Understanding how review processes lead to genuine change

Key Findings and Insights

Superintendent Mark Langhorn
Victoria Police

Safety of single officer patrols - What lessons have we learnt?

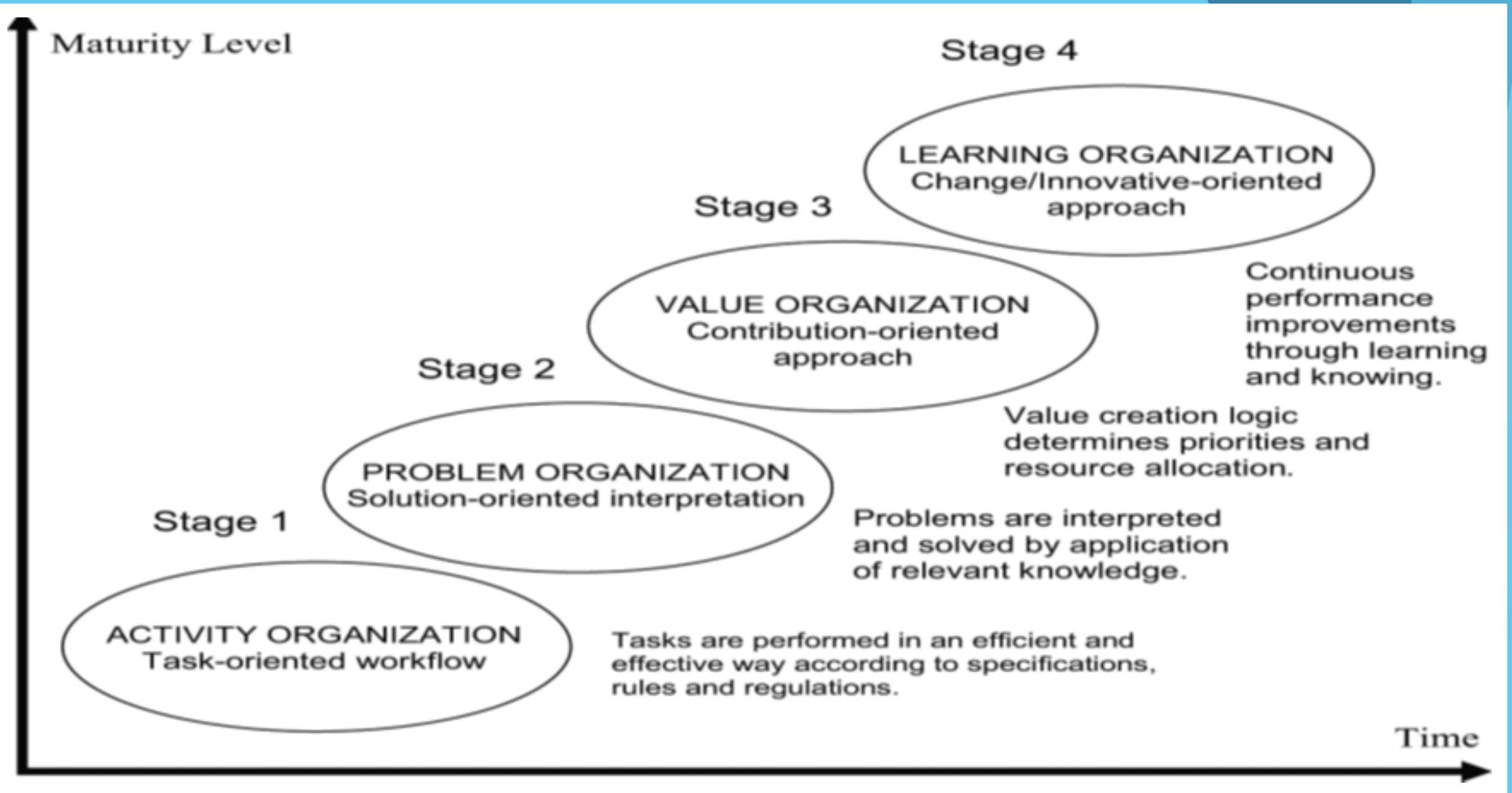
- ▶ 2005 murder of Senior Constable Anthony Clarke in Launching Place (country Victoria)
 - ▶ Led to the Single Officer Traffic Patrol Review by an Assistant Commissioner.
 - ▶ 2010 Coronial inquest made a recommendation to abolish single officer patrols.
- ▶ 2012 serious assault by hammer of Protective Services Officer James Vongvixay.
 - ▶ Led to internal review of PSO activities.
- ▶ 2013 stabbing of Senior Sergeant David Reither in Batesford (country Victoria)
 - ▶ Led to a safety review of Single Officer Patrols by a Commander.
- ▶ 2013 fatal police shooting in Windsor of Vlado Micetic by Traffic Patrol officer
 - ▶ Led to a critical incident review by a Superintendent.
- ▶ 2023 serious assault and injury of police member in Chiltern (country Victoria)
 - ▶ Led to thematic One Member Stations and Single Officer Patrol review.

An Innovation Project

The purpose of this project was to use Developmental Evaluation to design a framework for any emergency response agency that will improve Organisational Learning and ensure sustainable organisational change.

What is Organisational Learning

Organisational Learning is about identifying misalignment between an organisation's objective and acting to realign activities to achieve outcomes.



Core characteristics required of a Learning Organisation

Governance and Accountability - clear roles and responsibilities; and a framework and governance.

Culture and Engagement - a safe space for sharing lessons, with a no-blame culture and self-reflective leaders.

Commitment to Learning and Improvement - the organization continuously evolves and adapts to new challenges.

Processes and Resources - for identifying, communicating, and managing lessons.

Review and Feedback - review of decision making, and Quality Assurance processes to support contemporary practice.

Communication and Collaboration - open and transparent debriefs, and effective communication. Contributors consider the organization's higher-order goals.

Leadership participation in Organizational Learning is crucial by modelling the values and norms to drive a learning culture.

Principles that support a learning culture

Having tolerance for mistakes - create an environment where errors are viewed as opportunities for learning rather than solely as failures. Encourage experimentation.

Leadership uplift - develop leaders who actively value and promote Organizational Learning.

Establishing learning and development pathways - help employees understand how they can grow and contribute to the organization's learning culture.

Having guiding principles - to sustain learning and improvement

Strong governance processes - establish clear roles, responsibilities, and frameworks to support Organizational Learning.

Requirements of an effective review process

- ▶ **Ensuring a Safe Environment**
- ▶ **Establishing a Learning Culture**
- ▶ **Having Clear Criteria and Objectives**
- ▶ **Building in Reflective Practice**
- ▶ **Establishing Feedback Loops**
- ▶ **Promoting Active Participation**
- ▶ **Leadership**

Barriers and challenges to becoming a Learning Organisation

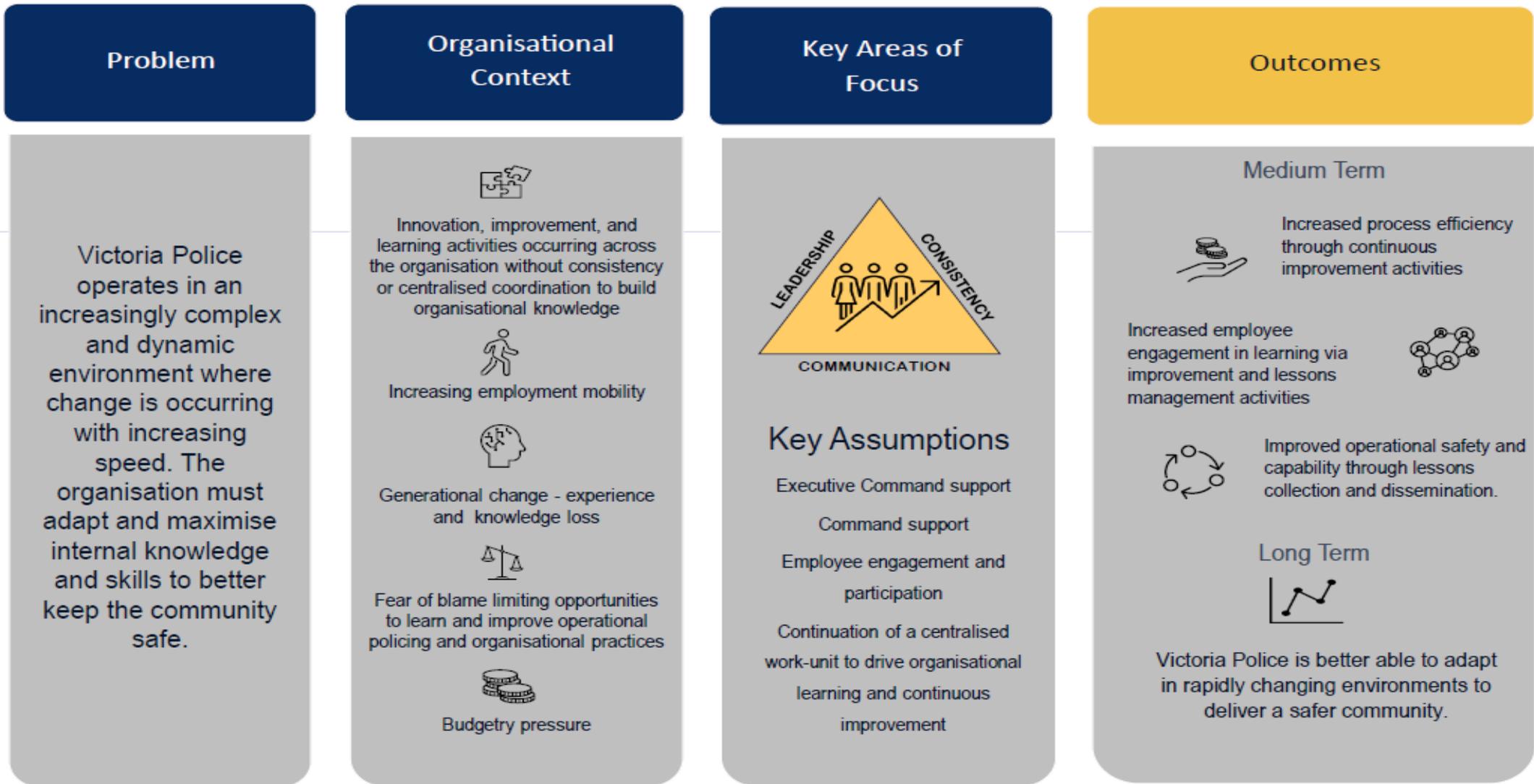
Silos - information often gets trapped.

Cultural barriers - inhibit learning and improvement; including **fear of mistakes** and of repercussions.

Governance and Accountability - the absence of clear governance structures and accountability mechanisms.

Processes - failure to develop systems to access previous learnings and lessons.

Theory of Change- Organisational Learning and Continuous Improvement Framework



Contact

mark.langhorn@police.vic.gov.au

Victoria Police Research and Reviews Division

Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

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5.15pm – Presentation 11

Building and leading a culture from learning lessons – a real-world case study

Daniel Austin

NSW State Emergency Service



Flooded with lessons



“Success today requires the agility and drive to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, react and reinvent”

-Bill Gates

About the SES

THE MOST VERSATILE AND WIDELY USED EMERGENCY SERVICE IN NSW

WE ARE THE COMBAT AGENCY FOR:



FLOODS



STORMS



TSUNAMI



Operates under
SERM Act 1989
& SES Act



Community
focused

WE ALSO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH:



Search and rescue operations



Community education



Incident response and support



Medical emergency support



Community preparedness and planning



Bushfire support



Established
in 1955



24-7
365 days

>11,000

Members across >260 units

97%

are volunteers



In 2023-24 we
responded to

>29,000

requests for help

Across 7 Zones



SUPPORTING CAPABILITIES:

- Recovery support
- Research & hazard planning
- Incident management
- Operational communication
- Community engagement & partnerships

The Back Story

Operational Improvement or Lessons wasn't new

After action reviews avoided

Outstanding action items

Unfulfilled recommendations

Confidence in change was low

New executive structure

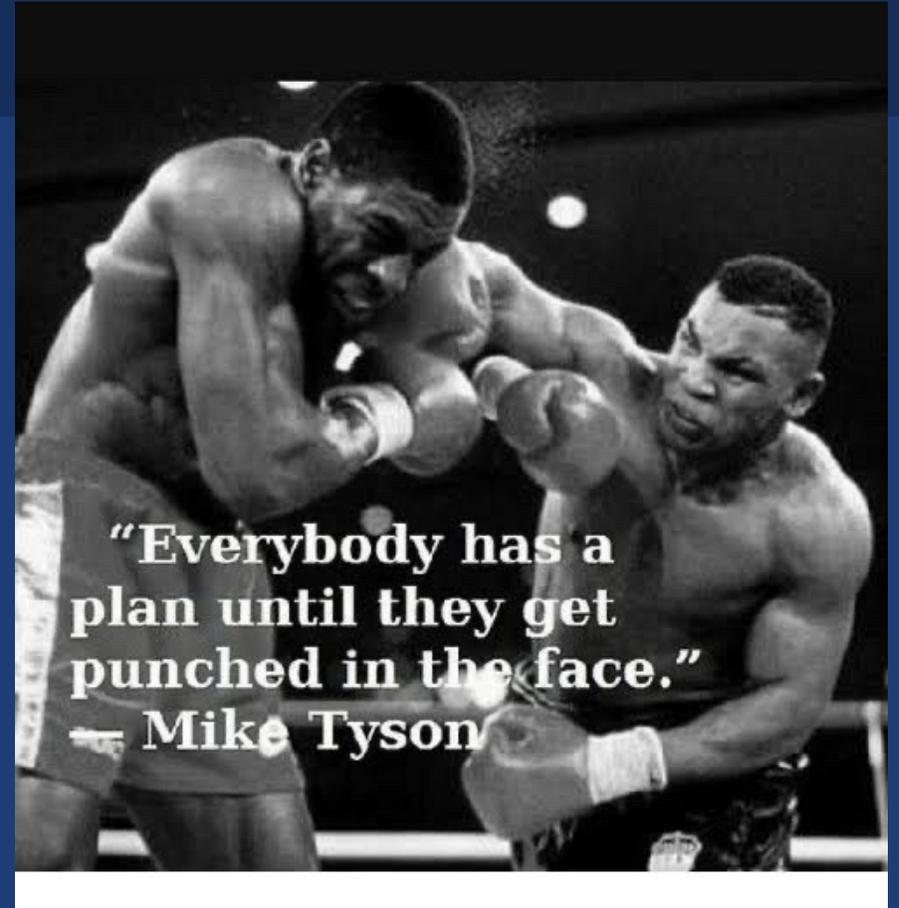
In 2020.....

I had listened

I had travelled

I'd done all of those things they tell you you're meant to do when you walk into a new organization

“I have a plan so cunning,
you could put a tail on it
and call it a fox.”



**“Everybody has a
plan until they get
punched in the face.”**
— Mike Tyson

■
We had a great plan. Then this happened...



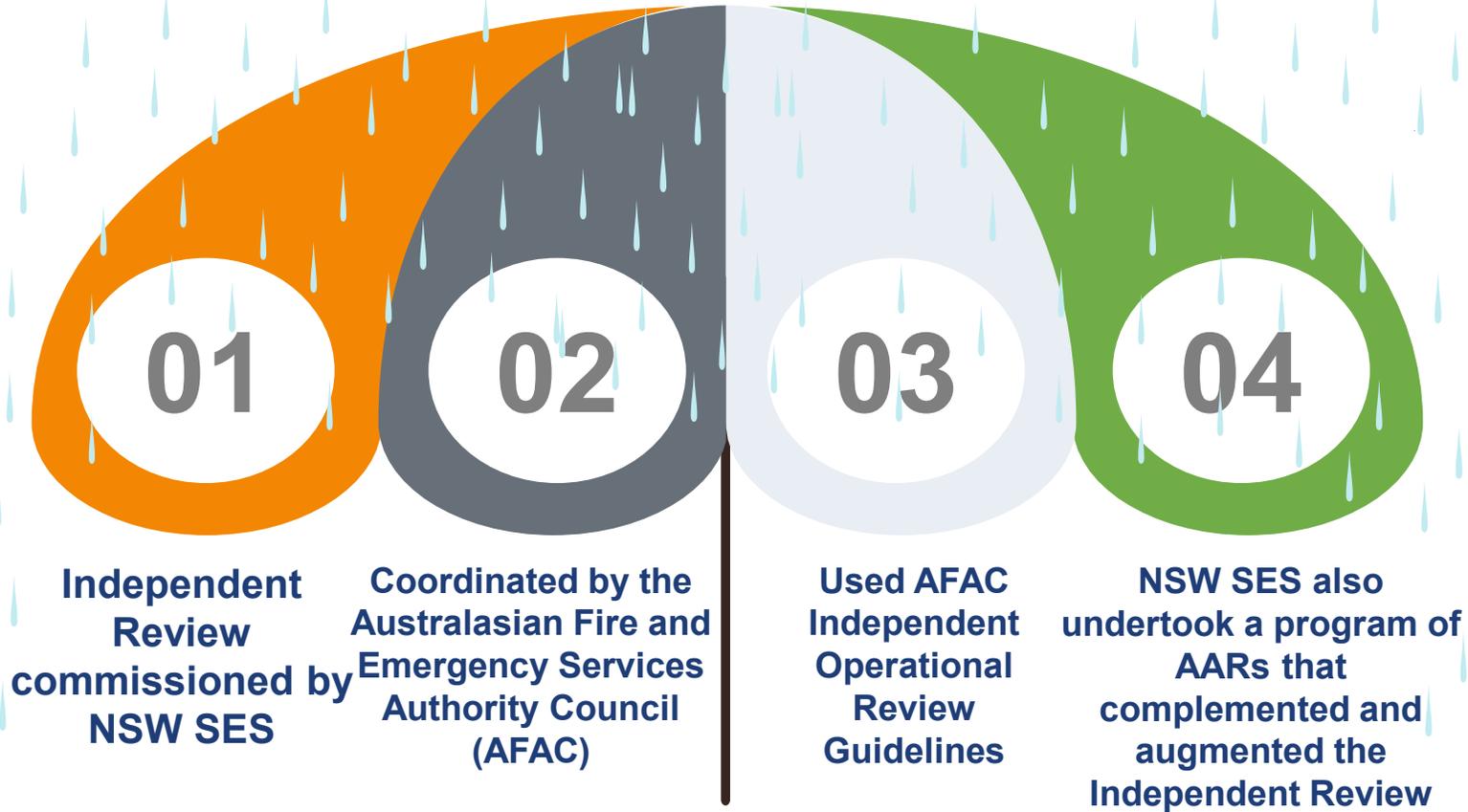
This video can be viewed in the recording of the event.

We had to make a decision....

- Defend the agency publicly and try and keep trying to fix the existing recommendations behind the scenes?
- Lean in to high profile external reviews?



AFAC Independent Review



We had to make another decision....

- Tell our teams that they all did their best and the reviews were unfair to keep their morale up?
- See these as an opportunity to build the organisation?



50 Days of Flood Operations - 22 February to 12 April 2022



33,421
Requests for
Assistance



More than
72,000 calls
to
132 500



1620 Flood
Bulletins



Over
3 million
website hits



Over 5600

Members
involved



Over 489,000
Member hours



582
Evacuation
Products



Over 2200
Flood Rescue
Activations

Record Flood
Levels
in eight locations



13 lives lost

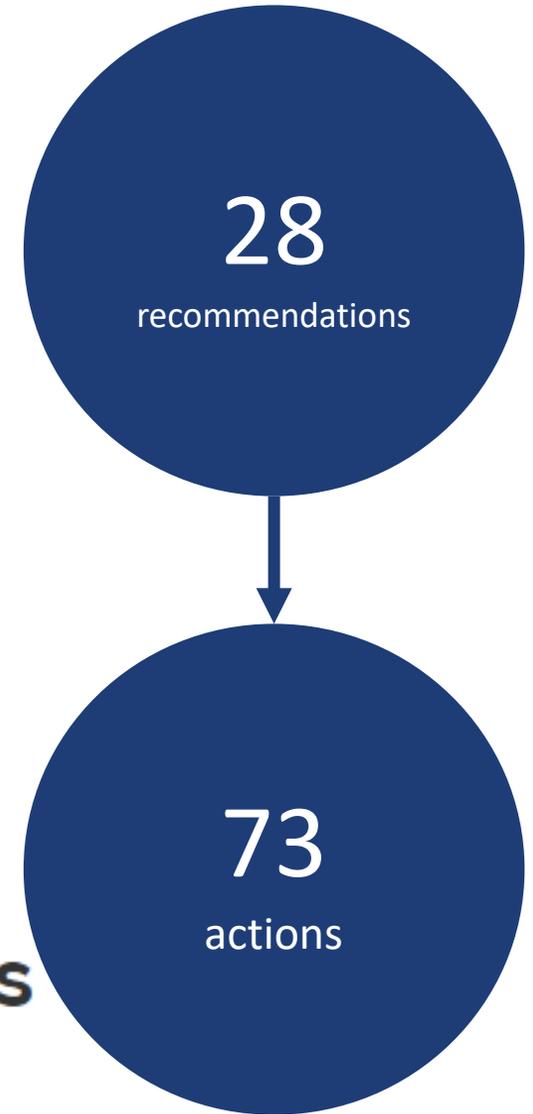
Followed by an external review...



New South Wales government launches flood inquiry

NSW government accepts all recommendations from long-awaited flood inquiry

By Freya Noble, Romy Gilbert | 8:01pm Aug 17, 2022



Earlier decisions to reflect lead to further positive outcomes

\$132 million record investment to future-proof the NSW SES

13 June 2022

The NSW Government is making its single biggest investment ever in the NSW State Emergency Service (SES), with \$132.7 million going towards its infrastructure, resources and staffing.

Last updated: 13/06/2022

June
2022
\$132M

Dec
2022
\$88.9M

NSW government commits \$200m to flood package to improve emergency responses

By Paige Cockburn

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) will receive a boost of \$94.7 million over four years to support flood response and rescue, including fleet and equipment.

July
2024
\$94.7M

What did we learn on our journey?

- Enable **strong leaders** and provide the data and advice to help them make good (sometimes hard!) **decisions**
- We **all** want it to be better
- Be deliberate about your **choices along the way**
- Demonstrate **humility**, show **accountability**,
- Remember your leadership **shadow**
- Good **governance** supports growth
- **Whole** of organisation – both operations & change **can** happen
- Not everybody will **understand** the journey from the outset



Where are we now?

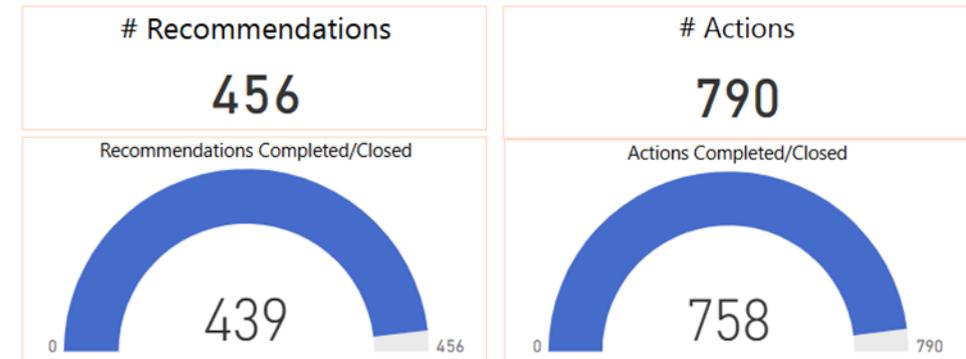
- AFAC Independent Inquiry – **Closed**
- Parliamentary Inquiry - **Closed**
- **Significant improvements delivered in:**
 - Warnings systems and processes
 - Flood rescue capability and capacity
 - ICT Systems
 - **Lessons database**
 - Wellbeing services
 - Training delivery and RTO processes
 - Community engagement and public information
 - Cybersecurity
 - Fleet size and capability
 - Facilities
 - Local resources to support volunteers and the communities

NSW State Emergency Service overhauls flood warning system

By Harriet Tatham | Floods
Thu 29 Sep 2022



The NSW SES has announced a major overhaul to the way flood warnings are issued. (ABC News: Harriet Tatham)



Cultural change: requests from the business outside of operational events for AARs and a strong desire to listen and reflect e.g. CrowdStrike

My takeaways



- *Its better to do it to yourself, rather than have someone do it to you*
- *Knowledge isn't power – shared knowledge is power!*
- *Experience is what you get just after you needed it.*
- *Are you learning for the next emergency, or just rehearsing the last one?*
- *The only thing more dangerous than a lack of progress, is the illusion of it*



Thank you!

Daniel Austin, Deputy Commissioner NSW SES



Lessons Management Forum 2025



Q&A

Don't forget to add you questions to Slido.

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Day 2 Concludes

Thank you for joining us today.

If you are joining online tomorrow, please use the same link and password as today.