



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Accounting for the Triple Bottom Line: a robust qualitative measure of the public value of research

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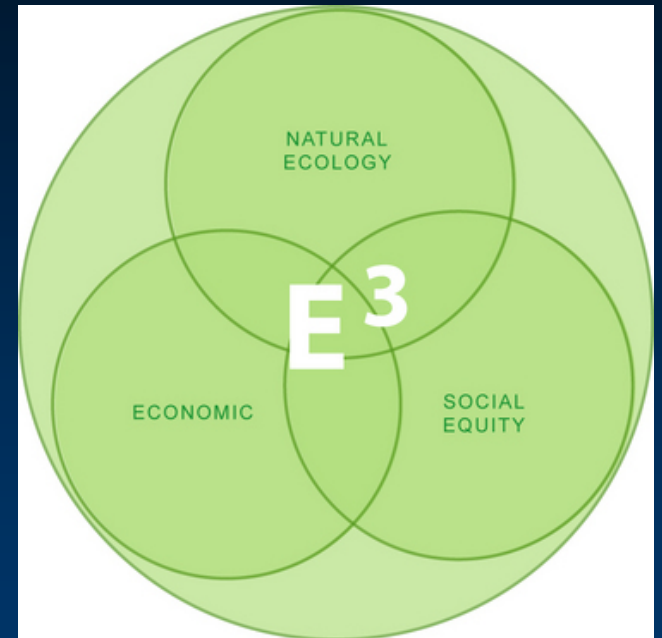
Research School of Social Sciences

Scope & limits of impact evaluation

- A new frontier
- An early impasse
- Quantitative impact indicators at rudimentary stage:
 - technometrics \Rightarrow economic returns \Rightarrow low level impact \Rightarrow private over public interest
 - sociometrics \Rightarrow macro social statistics \Rightarrow no credible causal link to particular research efforts
- Way forward is robust, holistic, qualitative measure of wider benefits of research

Role of impact evaluation: public value

- Meaningful impact assessments must strive to measure wider public value of research
- Triple bottom line accounting:
 - beyond neo-liberal NPM
 - centre-right, social democracy
 - economic, social, environmental gains
- Redefines purpose of STI policy
- Public value eludes quantitative approaches
- Impact data increasingly detached from STI policy imperatives



Role of impact evaluation: public value

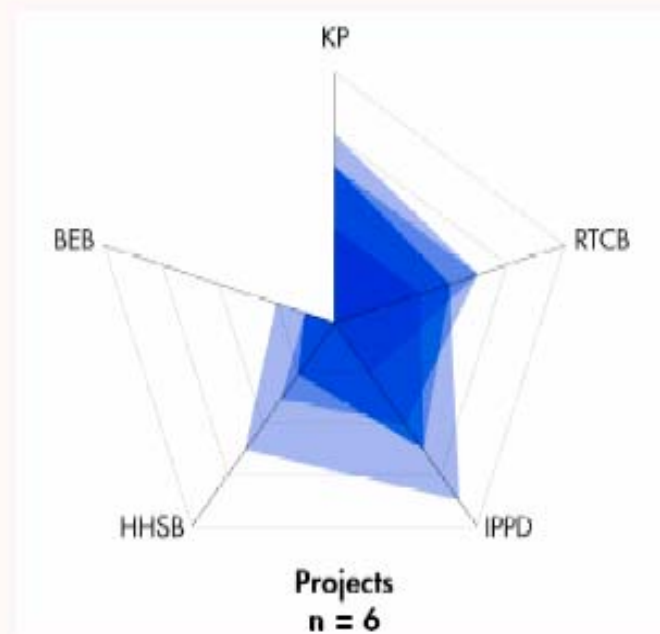
- Can be gauged qualitatively:
 - combination of quantitative and qualitative data
 - 'end user'/beneficiary testimony
 - moderation by panels of academic peers and 'end users'
- A qualitative framework:
 - does not entail woolly, unverifiable narratives
 - informs a rigorous assessment process
 - captures public value



Australia's Research Quality Framework (RQF)

Rating	Description
A	Adoption of the research has produced an outstanding social, economic, environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.
B	Adoption of the research has produced a significant social, economic environmental and/or cultural benefit for the wider community, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.
C	Research has been adopted to produce new policies, products, attitudes, behaviours and/or outlooks in the end user community.
D	Research has engaged with the end user community to address a social, economic, environmental and/or cultural issue regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.
E	Research has had limited or no identifiable social, economic, environmental and/or cultural outcome, regionally within Australia, nationally or internationally.

Overlaying Profiles



- Knowledge Production
- Research Targeting and Capacity Building
- Informing Policy and Product Development
- Health and Health Sector Benefits
- Broader Economic Benefits

Conclusion: research evaluation and beyond...

- Qualitative impact modelling can be applied to arenas beyond research evaluation:
 - public policy outcomes
 - government service delivery
- Similar impasse in public sector management literature:
 - confining public value of government services to blunt quantitative measures...
 - ...failing to capture wider public benefits
- Qualitative impact modelling a new foundation for evaluating 'triple bottom line' for all realms of public policy.

