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| **Title of Symposium** (Sentence case)Using evidence to improve health equity: The role of evaluation capacity building in health promotion organisations |
| **General Objective**Evaluation is an essential component of contemporary health promotion. Evaluation evidence is critical in enabling accountability to funders, contributing to policy and resource allocation and adding to the wider-evidence base for health promotion. Evaluation also plays a key role in promoting population health equity: it helps us identify whether programs are reaching their intended audience and who may be left behind. Evaluation can engage communities through participatory approaches, identify program strengths and areas for improvements and contribute to the success of health promotion strategies overall. To maximise the benefits of doing and using evaluation, the health promotion field recognises a need to improve capacity for evaluation. In order to progress understanding of the evaluation capacity in health promotion, this symposium aims to:* Generate conversation about the role of evaluation in promoting health equity and the importance of improving capacity for evaluation;
* Consider the range of motivations for evaluation capacity building in health promotion organisations;
* Advance collective knowledge of evaluation capacity building approaches relevant to health promotion; and
* Examine strategies to address important evaluation capacity factors in a variety of health promotion settings.

This symposium brings together researchers, and experts from government and non-government health promotion agencies to discuss the current evidence and experiences. Audience interaction will encourage participants to reflect on their experience of priorities for evaluation capacity building. A panel discussion will further address practical issues in building evaluation capacity, and priorities for strengthening evaluation capacity in different health promotion settings. Finally, participants will be invited to consider opportunities to address capacity to conduct and use evaluation for improved population health equity.**Proposed format of the session**Four speakers will each present for 10 minutes, followed by an interactive discussion between the panel and audience members, moderated by the symposium chair.**Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 1** (Sentence case)Towards an understanding of evaluation practice and capacity building |
| **General Objective**Evaluation is a core competency in health promotion that can help to address the pressing need for practice-based evidence concerning actions that will assist in reducing health inequities. Among the range of benefits that evaluation offers to policy-makers, practitioners and communities are improving the design of strategies, expanding project reach, facilitating stakeholder engagement, supporting organisational change, and enhancing project sustainability. Despite the acknowledged importance of evaluation, it is an area of health promotion program management that is consistently recognised as in need of strengthening. This first symposium presentation will examine frameworks and models that identify potentially important determinants of evaluation practice and factors that could catalyse improved evaluation capacity in the health promotion field.An understanding of evaluation practice in the health promotion field can be informed by literature on evaluation capacity building, knowledge transfer and evidence-based public health. Organisational learning capacity is posited to influence practitioner knowledge and skills for evaluation and the extent to which these are able to be successfully utilised. Organisational learning capacity encompasses leadership and support, the presence of a culture of inquiry, systems and structures to enable evaluation practice, and channels for communication of evaluation findings. Communities of practice is a perspective that describes the role that social networks play in learning and knowledge transfer within organisations, by providing personal support, sharing of expertise, and collaborative decision-making about the application of knowledge to practice. Systematic analysis of evidence-informed practice in public health has led to the identification of political, funding-body and wider community factors which may influence demand for evaluation, and the conditions under which this is conducted.The individual, organisational system levels factors that may affect the conduct and routinisation of evaluation will be summarised in this presentation, with consideration of their interrelatedness, and amenability to intervention.**Proposed format of the session**10 minute presentation and participation in panel discussion**Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**Ensure health equity throughout the life course, within and among countries, making each member of the global society an empowered lifelong learner |

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| **Title of Presentation 2** (Sentence case)What influences evaluation practice in health promotion? Evidence from an Australia-wide study  |
| **General Objective**In order to plan comprehensive, evidence-based strategies to improve health promotion evaluation capacity, there is a need to deepen our understanding of what influences evaluation practice in health promotion organisations and the wider prevention system. This session presents evidence from a recently completed, three year Australia-wide, mixed-methods research project. The landmark study aimed to identify the key individual, organisational and system-level factors that affect health promotion practice and better understand how these factors act to influence evaluation practice and quality.Building on the theoretical frameworks of evaluation capacity, the study examined the perspectives of health promotion practitioners and managers regarding the barriers and facilitators to evaluation practice in government and non-government organisations using qualitative interviews (n=40) and a validated survey (n=219). Finally, the study reviewed the methods used in health promotion evaluation reports (n=394) and conducted a quality appraisal. The findings from this research project contribute much needed evidence of factors that influence evaluation practice within health promotion. In particular, the presentation will highlight outcomes of the research project including: * the level of engagement of the health promotion sector in the research;
* the identification of common factors that influence evaluation practice in health promotion agencies, especially leadership, organisational culture, resourcing and administrative requirements and expectations;
* the relationships between individual, organisational and system level factors and how they affect evaluation practice and quality; and
* pivotal factors that should be addressed for the greatest gains in health promotion evaluation capacity.

The implications of the research will discussed in terms of the differences (and similarities) in evaluation practice between types of organisations, and the potential application of evaluation capacity building strategies in health promotion organisations, policy and funding arrangements and health promotion leadership. **Proposed format of the session**10 minute presentation and participation in panel discussion**Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 3** (Sentence case)Evaluation capacity building – two case studies from Western Australia |
| **General Objective**This session will describe two evaluation capacity building (ECB) models in Western Australia (WA) – in sexual health services and in the homelessness sector.Organisations are increasingly building evaluation capacity to support evidence-informed planning and evaluation of policies, programs and services. There is now growing awareness and acceptance that an investment in outcomes measurement and ECB has the potential to increase organisational sustainability and direct limited resources strategically and equitably. The Sexual Health and Blood-Borne Virus Applied Research and Evaluation Network (SiREN) was initiated as a pilot project in 2012 by the WA Health Department. SiREN is a partnership model, coordinated by Curtin University, involving policy makers, researchers and service providers. Its aims are to facilitate and support research and evaluation activities within organisations funded by the WA Health Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Program in order to generate evidence of effectiveness, disseminate knowledge and address research gaps. St Bartholomew’s House (St Bart’s) is a homelessness and housing support agency delivering services to a diverse range of individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. In 2016, St Bart’s embarked on a journey to build internal evaluation capacity and develop an outcomes measurement framework to monitor service effectiveness and drive continuous improvement.A critical success factor for ECB is strong leadership at all levels of the organisation. Accountability for service performance, quality and data integrity, an organisational culture that fosters learning and innovation, and data management systems and processes that support the collection of robust data are key enablers. Challenges for ECB include a high turnover of staff in human services, competitive and short term funding models with often limited resources for evaluation, and unrealistic expectations related to what outcomes can be measured. ECB is a long term investment and it can be 4-5 years before results are seen. The benefits and challenges of each ECB model will be discussed during this session which will be of interest to organisations interested in ECB.**Proposed format of the session**10 minute presentation and participation in panel discussion**Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |

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| **Title of Presentation 4** (Sentence case)Evidence-based evaluation capacity building: The NSW Health experience |
| **General Objective**This session will demonstrate NSW Health’s evidence-based approach to evaluation capacity building (ECB).An organisational culture that fosters the generation and use of evaluation evidence to inform practice is essential to improving health outcomes and equity. NSW Government policy requires programs be evaluated to ensure they are effective and accountable to the community. To achieve this, the policy recommends that public services support and develop evaluation capacity within their organisations. The NSW Ministry of Health’s Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence has a role in building NSW Health’s capacity to develop and use research and evaluation evidence, with the aim of improving ‘policy and program effectiveness, population health and equity in NSW’.A narrative review of ECB was completed to inform organisational practice. The evidence review identified a number of ECB success factors including having: an organisational commitment to evaluation and learning; a tailored strategy based on need; a multifaceted approach to ECB; increased communication about evaluation within the organisation; ongoing technical support within the organisation and utilising practice-based learning.These factors manifest within NSW Health in:* Supportive leadership and policies
* The *NSW Population Health Research Strategy 2018-2022*, which includes ECB for Aboriginal health
* Research and evaluation communities of practice across NSW Health
* Practice guides to assist policy makers to commission, undertake and use policy-relevant research and evaluation (over 1,700 downloads)
* The involvement of stakeholders throughout evaluation processes
* Graded evaluation workshops, plus workshops on critical appraisal, evidence reviews and economic evaluation (over 300 workshop attendees in 2017)
* Online training programs including an animated video
* Technical support.

Impacts can be evidenced by:* Technical support provided to over 40 program evaluations during 2017 (an increase from 22 in 2015)
* NSW Health funding a diversity portfolio of research and evaluation assets, funding schemes, centres and commissioned projects
* Increases in population and public health staff publications.

**Proposed format of the session**10 minute presentation and participation in panel discussion**Conference theme and/or subthemes addressed**Build effective, accountable and inclusive governance at all levels that promotes, peace, justice and respect of human rights |