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## ABOUT ME

I'm an independent policymaker and evaluator focused on improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians, particularly those who experience mental illness and complex disadvantage. I use my skills to design and drive systemic change, supporting the development of a health and social services system that puts people at the centre. I combine a depth of sector expertise – mental health and primary health workforce – with excellent skills as an evaluation and policy 'all rounder'.

### Sector expertise

I am interested in system and workforce design in the primary health sector, particularly mental health. My experience includes strategic planning, evaluation and service design in a range of organisations. I have worked with PHNs on their regional health planning, on program specifications and delivery models for government and not-for-profits, and evaluations of national public health initiatives.

In the early years of my career, I focused my efforts on developing health workforce systems that delivered the best outcomes in the best way for the health system. At the same time, I was undertaking advocacy based on my mental health lived experience in my 'personal' time. I soon realized that the personal and professional didn't have to be separate. As a result, the community and those with lived experience are at the heart of my work. I recognise the value of genuine engagement and collaborative design that balances evidence with the needs of consumers and those of delivery agents to deliver long-term, meaningful change.

I am particularly passionate about workplace mental health and workforce development. Partly this stems from my own experiences - positive and negative - of working with mental illness. I am privileged to use my voice to help others improve their workplaces, and create cultures that supportively align skills to need.

### Evaluation and policy 'all rounder'

I am passionate about evaluation and the capacity for organisations to learn through reflection. Following an early career in quantitative and qualitative research and policy, I have learned evaluation skills 'on the job' as a consultant and internal evaluator, and through formal study. I am skilled at developing evaluation tools including frameworks, program logics and data collection tools. Evaluation capacity building is at the core of all the work I undertake with client.

I am primarily a qualitative researcher, highly skilled at delivering focus groups and undertaking interviews with vulnerable populations with sensitivity. My writing and analysis skills are sought out, and I regularly deliver training on evaluation skills and writing for evaluation impact.

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## SKILLS

- ✓ Evaluation design and delivery utilising a range of methodological approaches
- ✓ Evaluation capacity building, including coaching and support to develop theories of change, evaluation frameworks and data systems
- ✓ Qualitative research, including literature reviews, interviews and focus groups
- ✓ Designing and delivering collaborative design and stakeholder engagement approaches
- ✓ Program and system design, and organisational strategy
- ✓ Policy writing, including position statements and business cases
- ✓ Mental health subject matter expertise

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## EDUCATION

BA (Hons), Modern History and Politics, Upper Second, University of Oxford (2011)

- Thesis: the impact of the expansion of the welfare state on philanthropic organisations in post-war Britain
- Award: winner of the Deloitte National Student Public Policy Essay (2011)

Graduate Certificate, Evaluation, High Distinction (85% average), University of Melbourne (2019)

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## MEMBERSHIP

- Secretary, Women's Mental Health Network Victoria (2020-present)
  - Board Member, Australian Borderline Personality Disorder Foundation (2019-present)
  - Blog Editor and Member, Australian Evaluation Society (2014 – present)
  - Member, International Association of Youth Mental Health (2015 – present)
  - Member, Social Impact Measurement Network of Australian (2017 – present)
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## ADVISORY ROLES

- Lived experience representative on Advisory Group for *Clinical guidelines for the diagnosis and management of work-related mental health conditions in general practice* (2020-21)
  - Faculty, Zero Suicide Institute of Australasia (2020-present)
  - Evaluation Working Group, NWI, National Mental Health Commission (2020-present)
  - Lived experience advisory on National Eating Disorder Collaboration development of *Guidelines for the treatment of eating disorders for people living in larger bodies* (2020-present)
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## PROJECT EXAMPLES (MORE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST)

- Consultation on the National University Mental Health Framework, Orygen (2020)
  - Literature review on youth mental health models (subcontract), a Victorian PHN (2020)
  - Evaluation of DV-alert training (with WhereTo), Department of Social Services (2020-21)
  - Evaluation of NSW Mentally Healthy Workplace Strategy (with Urbis), Safe Work NSW (2020-22)
  - Rapid literature review on HealthPathways (subcontract), a Victorian PHN (2020)
  - Development of Zero Suicide in Healthcare training, Zero Suicide Institute of Australasia (2020)
  - Quantitative analysis for evaluation of Contact Centre Wellbeing project, SuperFriend (2019 and 2020)
  - Evaluation of the GP Academic Post and Education Research Grant Programs, RACGP (2019-21)
  - Evaluation of the Embrace Change NDIS Standards project, Mental Health Coordinating Council (2019-21)
  - Evaluation of family violence Technology Trials initiative (with WhereTo), Department of Social Services (2019-20)
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## TRAINING

- Beginner's Guide to Developmental Evaluation, Clear Horizon (2020)
- Applying implementation science to evaluation, Centre for Evidence and Implementation (2019)
- Power BI for Social Impact Measurement, Clear Horizon (2019)
- Co-design in evaluation, Auckland Co-Design Lab (2018)
- First 1000 Days, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health (2017)
- Marumali Program for non-Aboriginal Service Providers, Marumali (2016)
- Realist Evaluation, Gill Westthorp (2014)
- Foundation Statistics in SPSS, Swinburne University (2013)

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## ADVOCACY

- [Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system](#) (2019), featured in the Interim Report
- [Submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health](#), following Draft Report (2020)
- Speaker, Beyond Blue (2019 – present)
- National Register of Mental Health Consumers and Carers (2017 – 2018)
- Project Synergy Lived Experience Advisory Board/Lived Experience Evaluation Adviser (2017 – 2018)
- National Youth Research Council, Orygen the National Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health (2015 – 2017)
- Lived experience writing at [www.jofarmer.com/blog](http://www.jofarmer.com/blog)
- Featured in [SANE](#), [Mammamia](#) and Muse magazine

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## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

### Presentations

- [Supporting people with a mental health condition to stay at and return to work](#), Beyond Blue webcast (2019)
- Developing successful funding proposals to government, Emerging Health Managers ACHSM (2018)
- Joining the dots between evaluation and strategy (2018, Australian Evaluation Society Conference)
- Evaluating with a lived experience: balancing values and power (2018, Australian Evaluation Society Conference)
- Telling our stories: changing the culture. Young people's and researchers' experience of youth participation in the research agenda (2017, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Congress)
- What researchers can learn from evaluators (2016, presentation at Orygen youth participation mini-conference)

### Reports

*Some of the examples below were completed with previous employers; I have included only those publications where I was a lead author.*

- [Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health](#) (2019, contracted to the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance)
- [Consultations on the National Sports Plan](#) (2018, Department of Health)
- [South Eastern Melbourne PHN Stepped Care Model](#) (2017, SEMPHN)
- [Capturing practice knowledge from the Royal Commission support model](#) (2017, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse)
- [Evaluation of the National Palliative Care Strategy 2010](#) (2016, Department of Health)
- [Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) and accompanying [practice exemplars](#) (2015, Department of Health)
- [Healing Informed Organisations](#) (2015, Healing Foundation)
- [Unlocking skills in hospitals: better jobs, more care](#) (2014, Grattan Institute)

### Articles

- [Conversations to have when designing a program: fostering evaluative thinking](#) (2018, Better Evaluation)
- Reflections on the AES 2017 International Evaluation Conference: "Evaluation Capital" (2017, Evaluation 23:4)

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Beyond Blue

Workplace strategy, policy and evaluation lead (Jan 2017 – Aug 2018)

I managed the strategic direction of the Workplace mental health program at Beyond Blue. I led Beyond Blue's policy commitment to workplace mental health, including advocacy through the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance and management of key relationships with mental health not-for-profits, government agencies, unions and regulators. Having overseen the conclusion of the existing evaluation framework, I established a new framework and data management system for the Program.

Selected achievements:

- Contracted by the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance to write their collective submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into Mental Health
- Developed the 2018-21 Workplace Program Strategy, and design process for the 2019-2022 Beyond Blue Community Engagement Strategy
- Provide government relations and strategic support to the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance CEO Steering Group
- Developed a successful funding proposal to the Commonwealth Government, and wrote speeches for Hon Julia Gillard and CEO Georgie Harman

### Department of Health and Human Services

Senior Policy Adviser, Aboriginal Workforce (May 2016 – Aug 2016)

As a member of the Health Workforce Planning & Initiatives Unit, I provided high level policy advice on National and State Aboriginal Workforce issues. I was responsible for leading the development of a new Aboriginal Health and Human Services Workforce Strategy and Implementation Plan to increase the capacity of health and human services service to deliver improved access and service provision to Victorian Aboriginal communities.

### Additional experience

- Seconded to Teach for Australia to support CEO (Sep 2014 – Nov 2014)

### Urbis

Senior Consultant, Economic and Social Advisory (Apr 2014 – Jan 2017)

The Economic and Social Advisory team is responsible for program evaluations and strategic advice at all levels of government, for not-for-profits and service delivery agencies. I specialised in projects in the mental health and justice sectors, and work with Aboriginal communities, primarily on social and emotional wellbeing. During my time at Urbis I worked as a primary researcher and evaluator (skilled in qualitative and quantitative methods) and project manager.

Selected achievements:

- Project managed several key projects, including: national consultations on the Fifth National Mental Health Plan and the National Sports Plan; manager of the Evaluation of the Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Plan for the Victorian Department of Justice; and, development of mental health service models for Victoria PHNs
- Technical skills including SPSS, leading consultation and survey development
- Sat on the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy LGBTI Working Group, and the Emerging Leaders group

### Grattan Institute

Associate, Health Program (Apr 2012 – Apr 2014)

I worked on health workforce issues; health and education datasets; health funding models; and, end of life care. I was the lead researcher and author on 'Unlocking skills in hospitals', a report that outlined a new approach to utilising health workforce in hospitals. I undertook research - primary and secondary data analysis, and literature reviews - and wrote reports. I was involved in all aspects of report launches, including media briefs, op-eds, stakeholder and media engagement, and assistance with events.

- Policy officer, Victorian Healthcare Association (Oct 2011 – Apr 2012)
- Demos, Home and Families intern (Jun 2010 – Oct 2010)