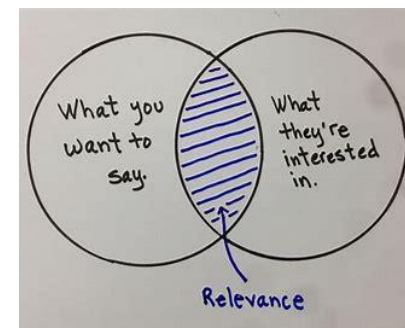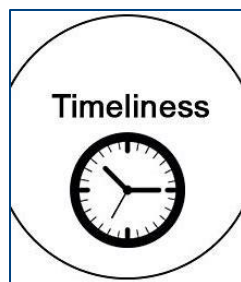Australian Government

Department of Social Services

The Future of Data
A policy-department perspective

August 2023

The Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders both past and present.

Quality

ACCURACY 100% ACCURACY

Timeliness

interpretable

COHERENCE

Accessibility

What you want to say. What they're interested in. Relevance

Accuracy really does matter – especially to vulnerable Australians

DSS report on over 20% of Australia's population

- As at 30 June 2023, 6.3 million people benefit from Centrelink
- Of those, 5.0m receive an income support payment

Many of these recipients benefit from six-monthly indexation

- Vulnerable Australians benefit from ABS' CPI and/or Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index and the accurate application of those indexes to social security payments twice a year

Scrutiny is high

- Minister's speeches, interviews, debates in Parliament
- Senate Estimates
- Questions on Notice

Along with accuracy, timeliness matters

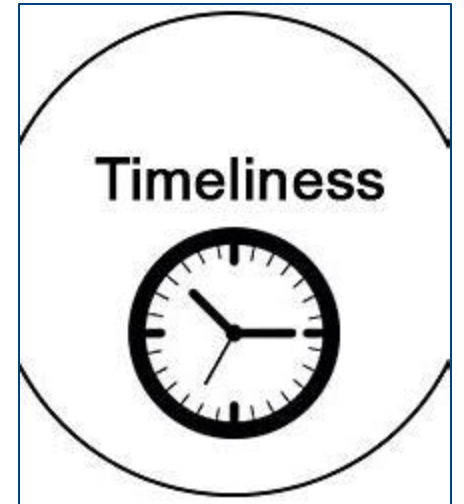The future is **more 'real-time' data**

- Monthly releases are fantastic

The future is **not more surveys**

- COVID-19 accelerated use of public and private-sector data sources

- Lets keep going forward, not back

The future goes **beyond statistical data integration**

- [Unemployment and underemployment significant drivers of suicide analysis - The University of Sydney](#)
  - The study used a relatively new analytical method called **convergent cross mapping** to confirm causal effects of underemployment and unemployment over time on suicidal behaviour.

Timeliness

Data needs to be interpretable and is interpreted

In the May 2023-24 Budget, the Government announced a $40 per fortnight increase to the JobSeeker payment from September 2023

- Commentators converted to a daily amount and compared to the cost of a coffee

Everything happens somewhere and **geospatial is the future**

- Stronger Places, Stronger People
  - **$35 million** to the first 5 year phase until 30 June 2024.
  - A further **$64 million** over 6 years to 30 June 2029

- Entrenched disadvantage package
  - **$199.8 million** package to target entrenched community disadvantage

Stronger Places, Stronger People

The **data** tells us which communities we need to prioritise

The **evidence** tells us where to invest to ensure **children and their families have strong futures**

The **voices of the local leaders and families** tells us how to work effectively in the **local context**

The **learnings and evaluations** of our progress tell us what features of the model make the most difference so we can drive **system changes** at scale to maximise what works

Coherence builds trust

The future requires **investment in, and an eye on, coherence**

- Over time
  - Revisions can matter

- Between data assets
  - e.g. MADIP, NDDA, AIR-MADIP, DOMINO, etc

- Across geographies
  - Future requires more use of agreed geographies e.g. Australian Statistical Geography Standard

Accessibility builds trust

The future needs a **wider interpretation of accessibility**
– Disabled
– Communities
– First Nations

The future should leverage the **five safes framewor**k

- DSS have released 33 datasets on [data.gov.au – beta](data.gov.au)

- Grant outcomes are available on grants.gov.au

- Data from DSS' investment in surveys and studies are publicly available
    – HILDA
    – [Footprints in Time – The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)](#)
    – [Growing Up in Australia (LSAC)](#)
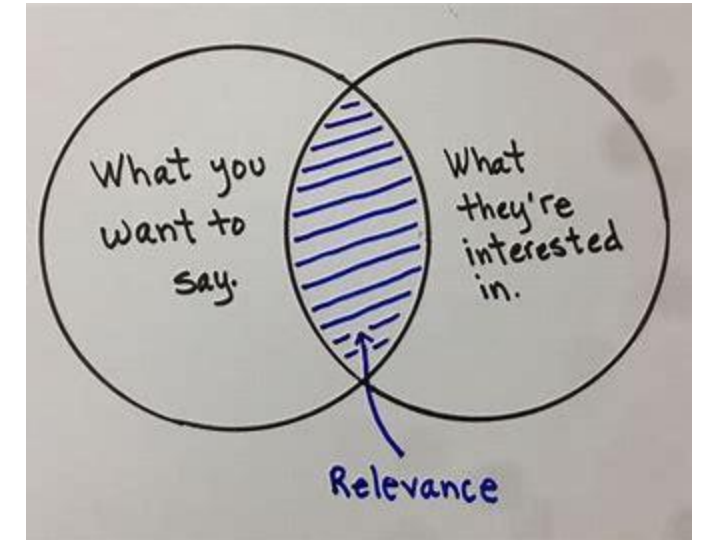   – [Building a New Life in Australia](#)

Relevance

The future is **more joined up**

– Using Life Course Data initiative, MADIP, HILDA, LSIC, LSAC, BNLA etc in Annual Report performance measures, in Measuring What Matters, as the data source for evaluations

The future involves **agreed priorities**

– Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4

– Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

– Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

– A strong focus on public reporting, governance and evaluation to inform if the Strategy is changing the lives of people with disability

What you want to say.   What they're interested in.

Relevance

4) Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

Who is my data futurist?

Dr. Steve MacFeely
Director, Data and Analytics,
World Health Organisation

- Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Policy Studies, University College Cork, Ireland
- Director of the IASE International Statistical Literacy Program.
- Co-chair of the Committee of the Chief Statisticians of the UN System (CCS-UN)
- Chair of the Advisory Board of the Statistical Journal of the IAOS
- Member of the statistical advisory panel to the UNDP Human Development Index
- Elected member of the International Statistics Institute
- Co-lead on the Data Strategy of the UN Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere 2020 – 2022
- Lead author of the 2020 System-wide Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics
- Was the Head of Statistics and Information at UNCTAD; the Deputy Director-General at the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland and Programme Director of the joint CSO - Institute of Public Administration 'Professional Diploma in Official Statistics & Policy Evaluation'.

Thank you

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