

Keynote 4

Policy and decisions by numbers: Balancing the databook

Presented by

Alex Lawrie
Researcher, Institute for Public Policy and Governance and
Centre for Local Government
University of Technology Sydney



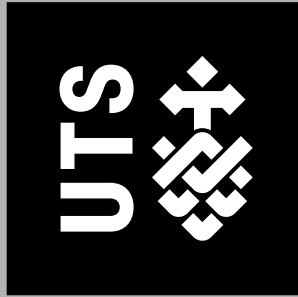
Policy and Decision Making by Numbers

Local Government Internal Audit Forum

Alex Lawrie

Centre for Local Government

University of Technology Sydney



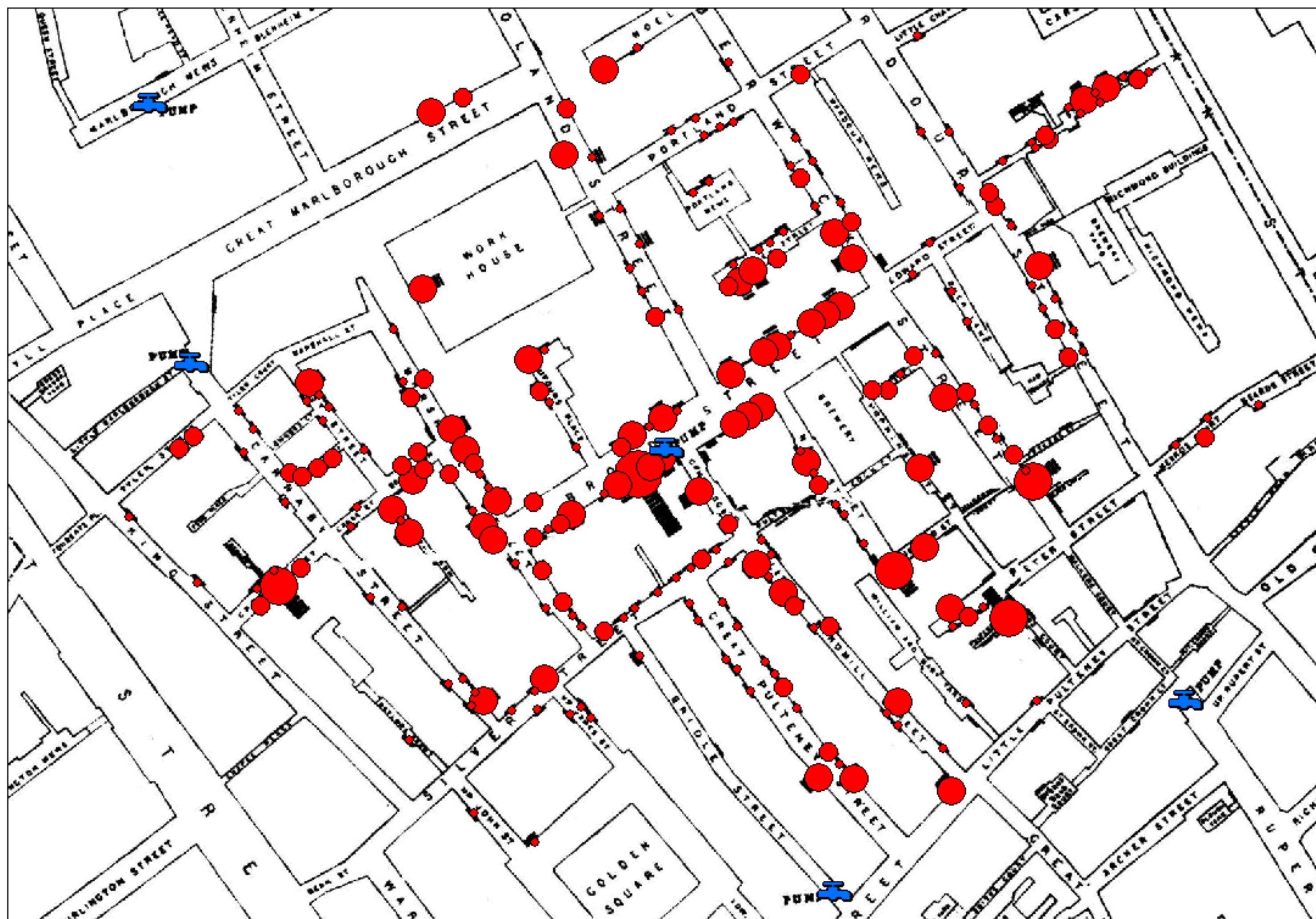
1. Why do we use data?
2. What is 'data'?
3. How is data used?
4. Workforce planning



Why do we use data?

90%

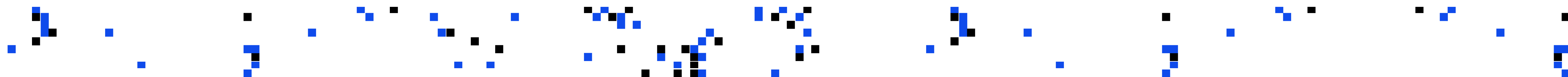
88%



Why do we use data?

“The pursuit of evidence-based policy is a desirable aim, in the sense it will lead to the delivery of services closer to society’s preferences than would otherwise have been the case”

(La Caze, 2006)



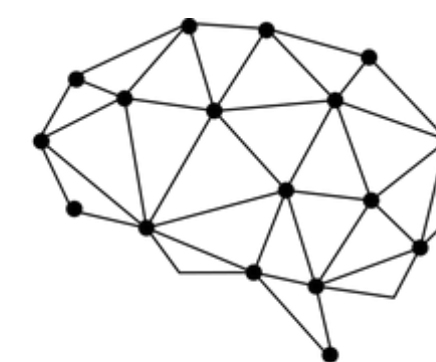
#CENSUSFAIL



Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency

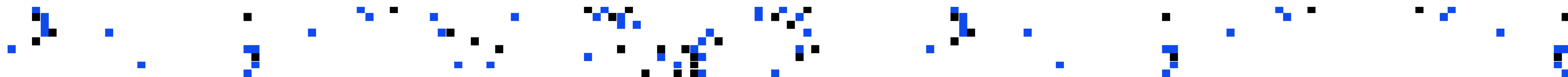


My Health Record



Cambridge
Analytica

**Councils pry into residents' metadata to chase down
fines**



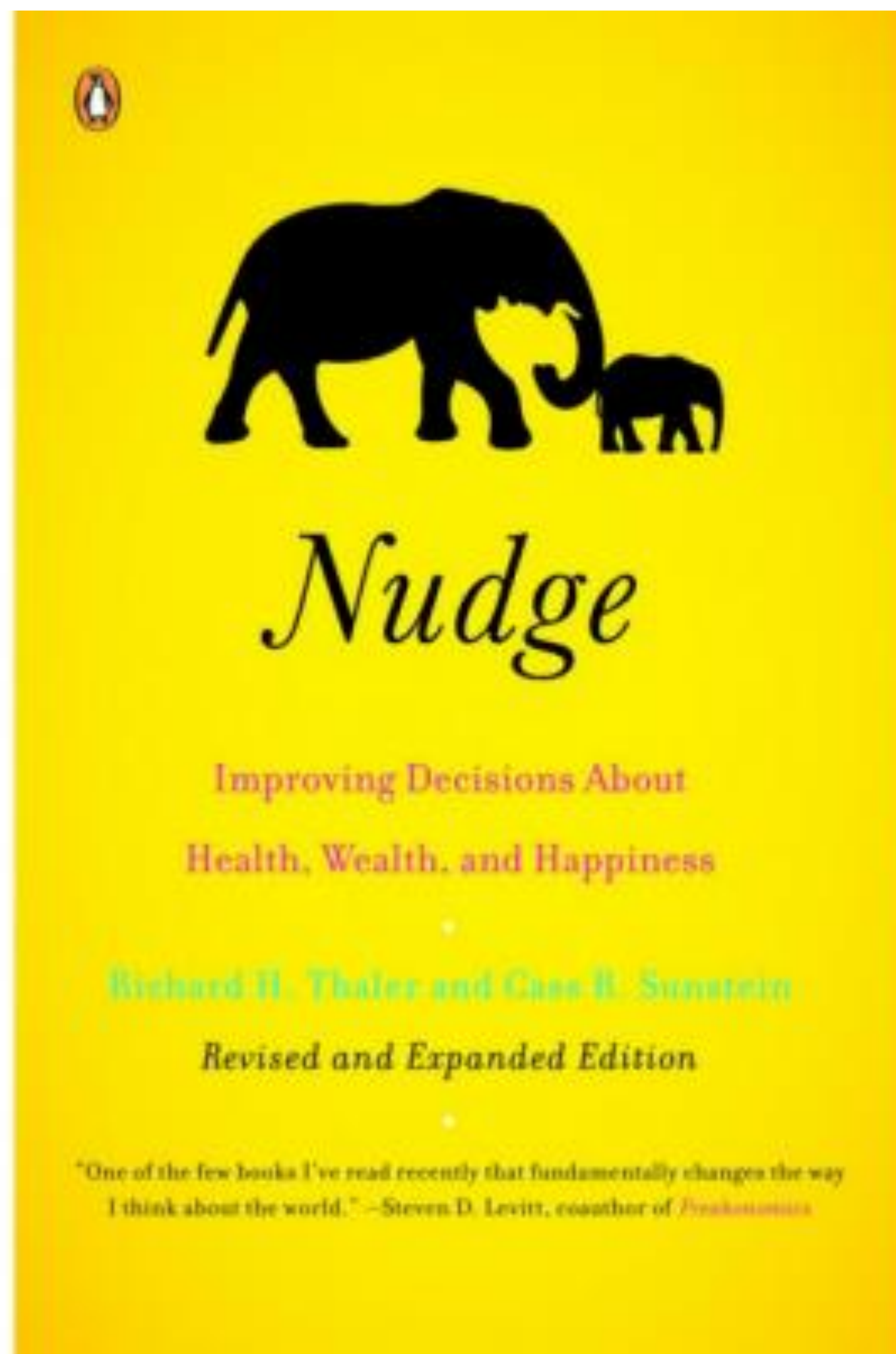
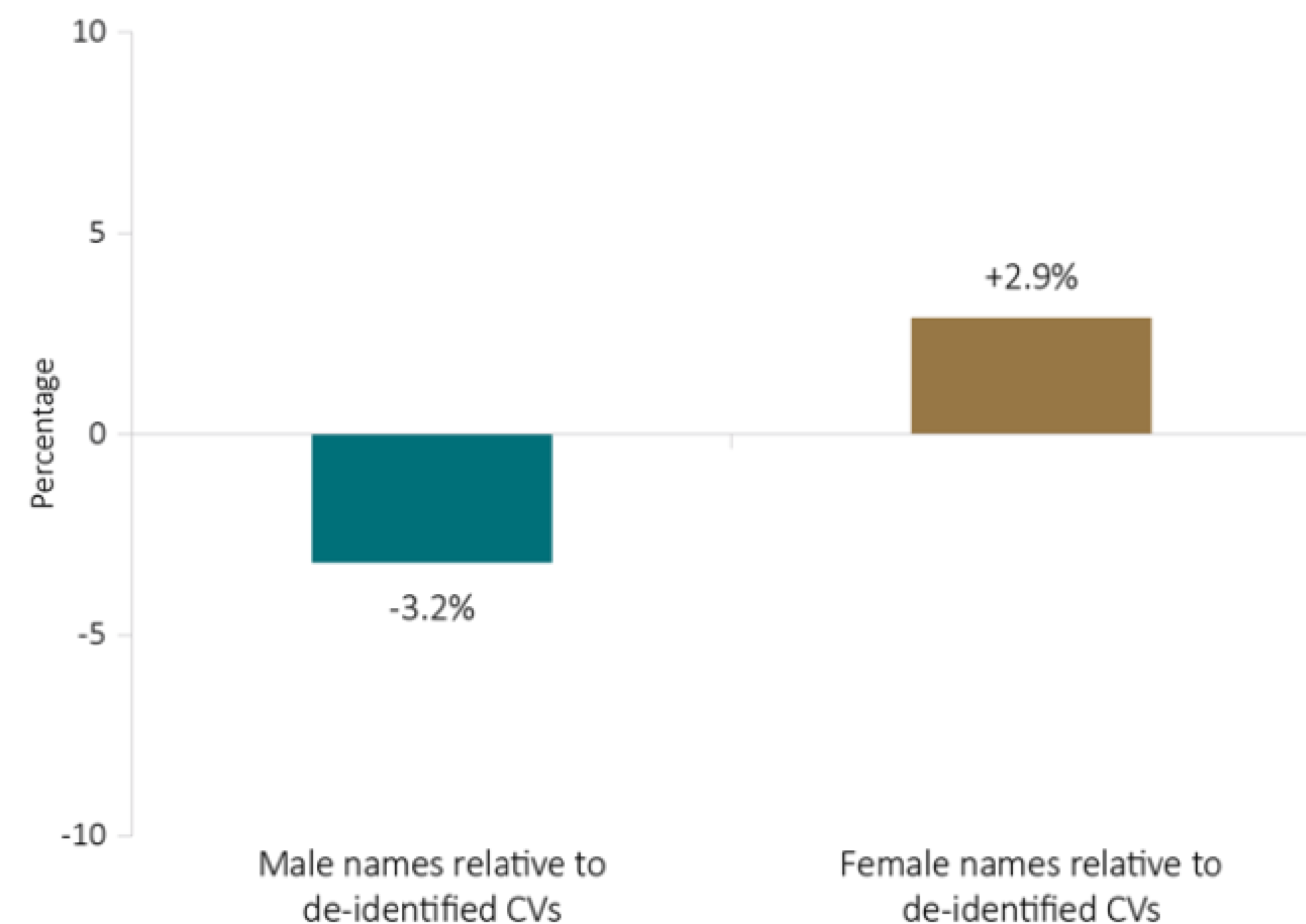


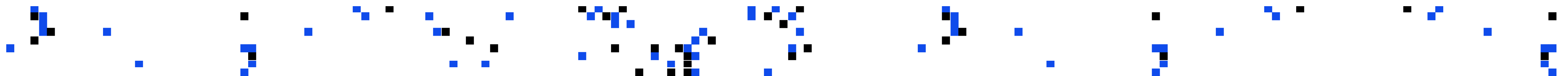
FIGURE 2: GENDER BIAS - WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF IDENTIFICATION ON THE SHORTLIST



Note: Candidates were shortlisted more when their names indicated they were female. Male candidates were less likely to be shortlisted when their names were identifiable.

Why do we use data?

“Evidence-based policy has an attractive and reassuring ring about it. It sounds as though it should be contrasted with guesswork, ideologically-driven and media re-active policy”





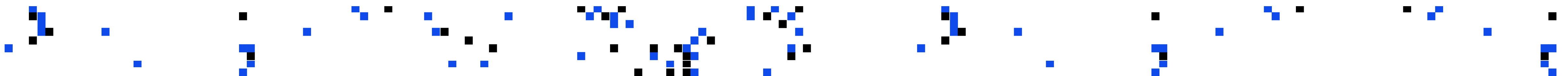
What is 'data'?



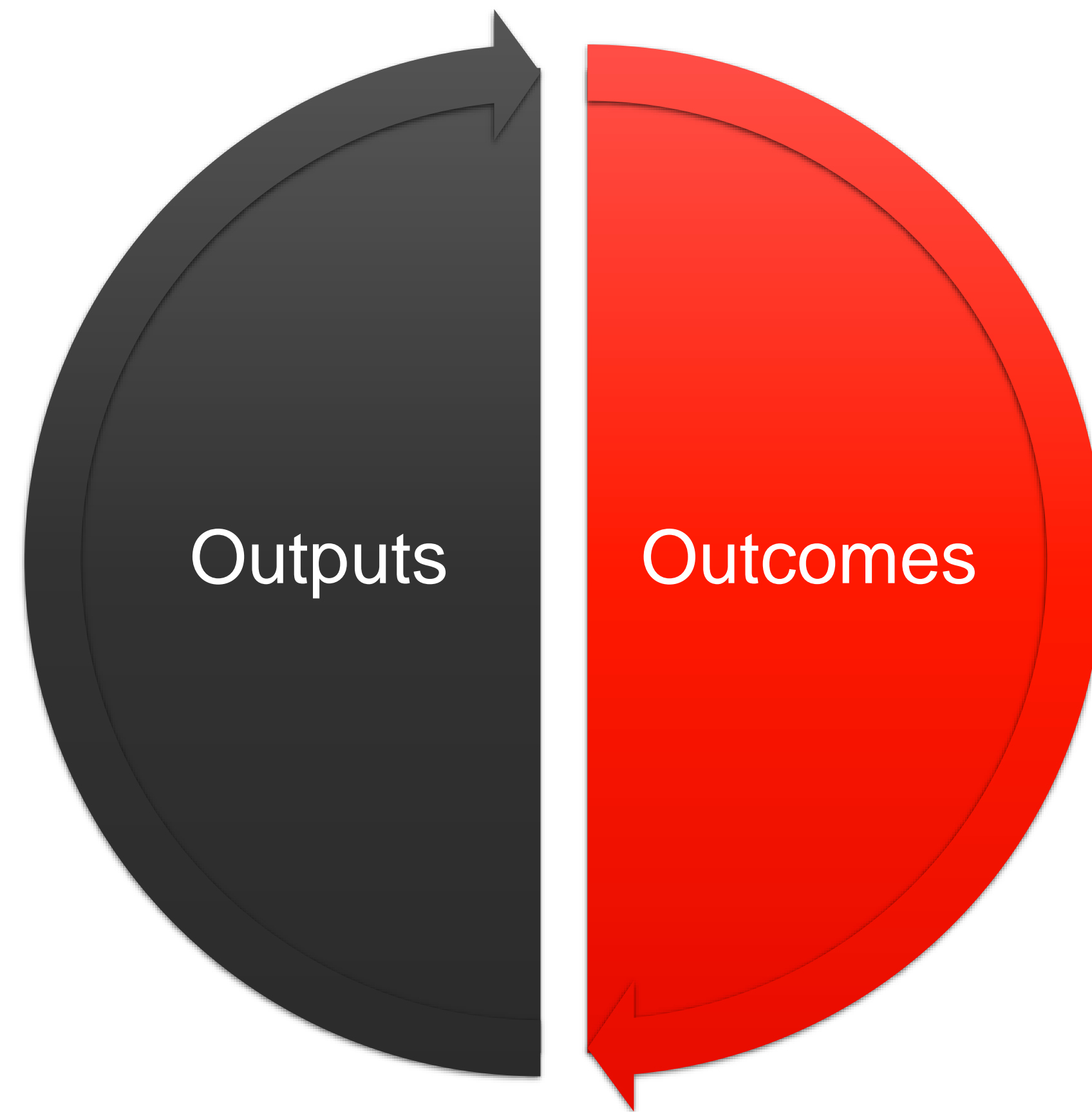
‘What Counts?’

1. Expert and practitioner knowledge
2. Existing and new domestic and international research
3. Stakeholder consultation and analysis of outcomes
4. Policy options costing
5. Economic or statistical modelling
6. Qualitative methods
7. Evaluation of previous policies and outcomes

*In any policy area,
there is a great deal
of evidence held in
the minds of front-
line staff and those
to whom policy is
directed*



Outputs and Outcomes

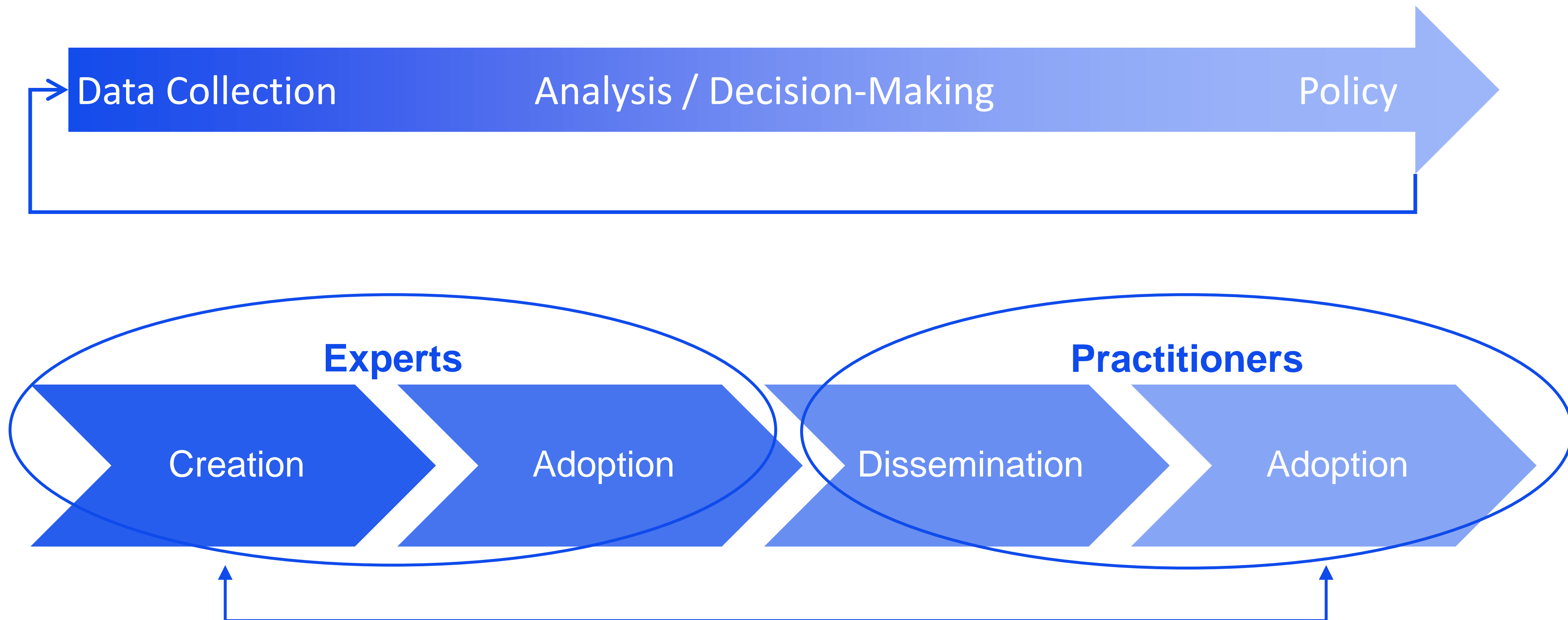




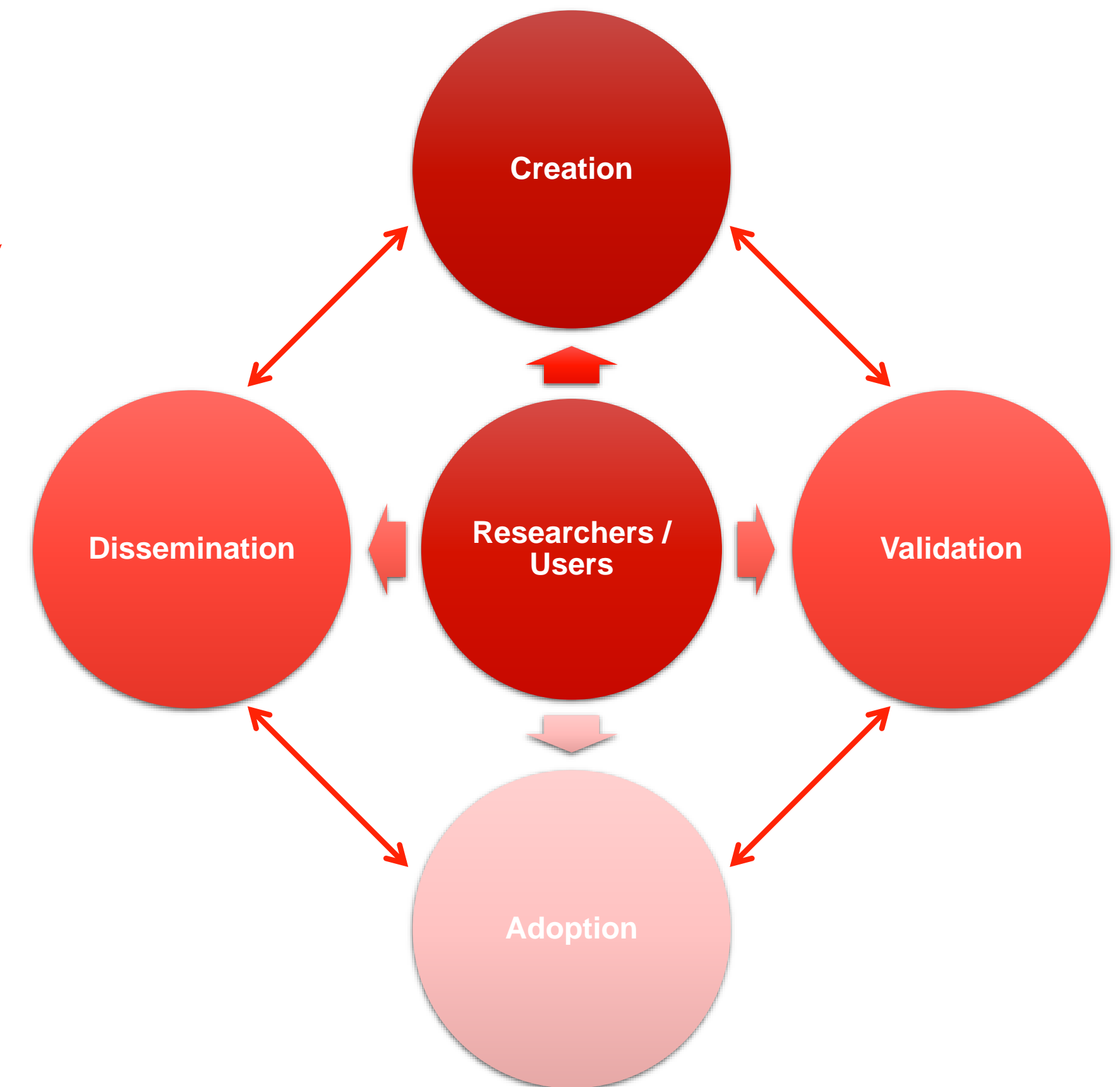
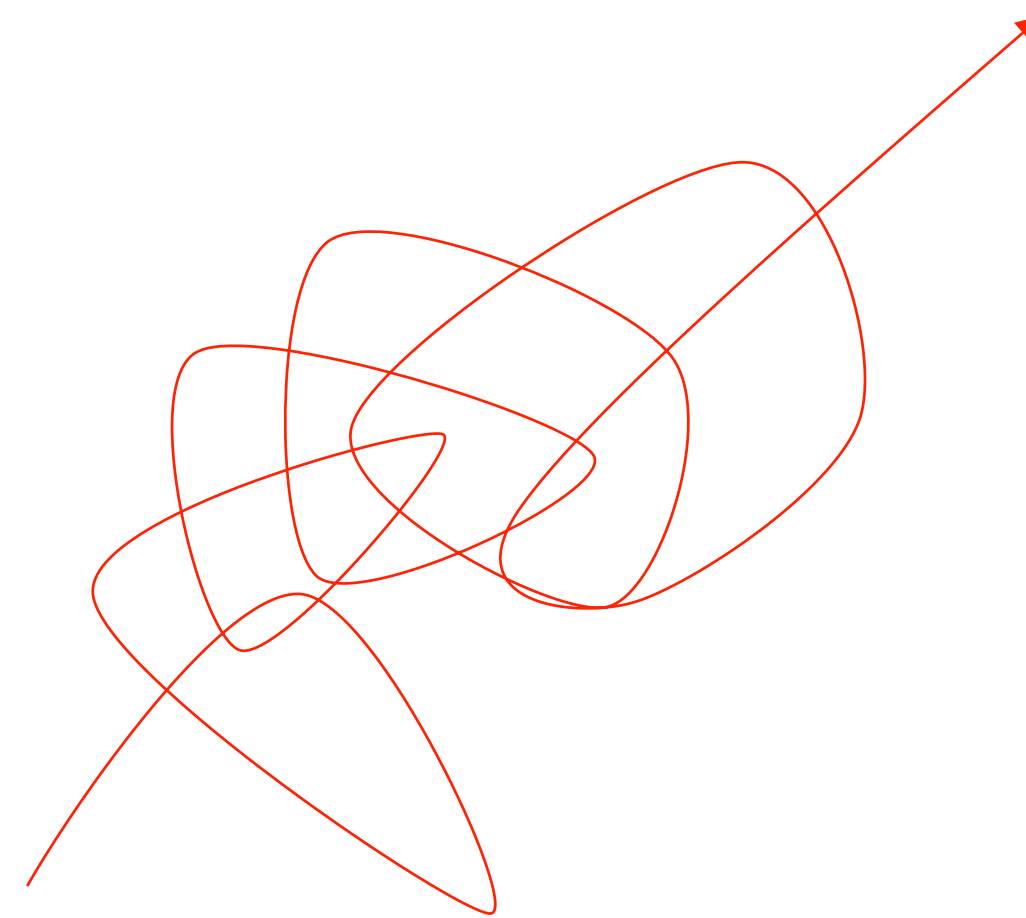
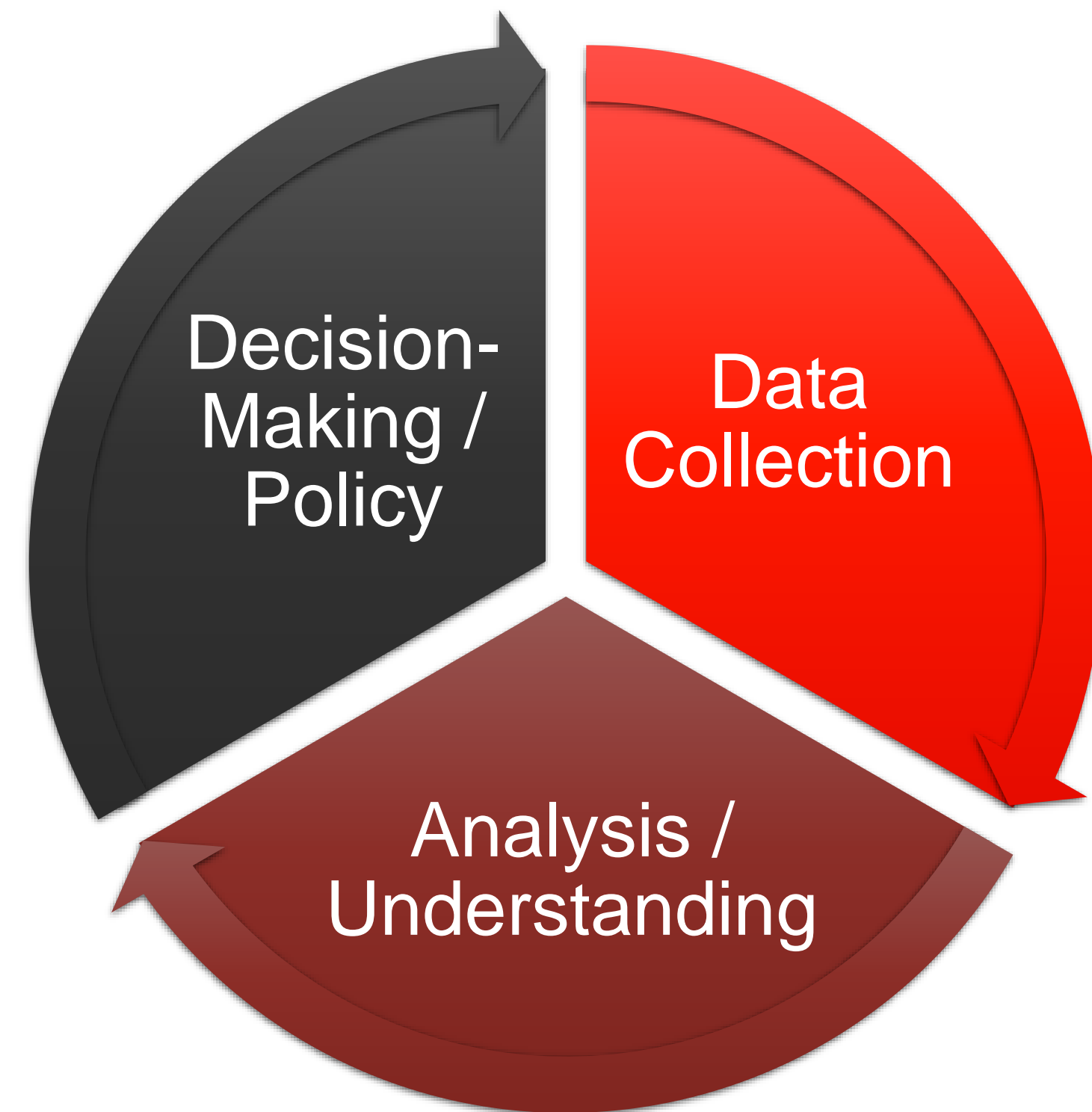
How is data used?



Traditionally...Evidence-Based



Now...Evidence-Informed



How is data used in policy and decision making?

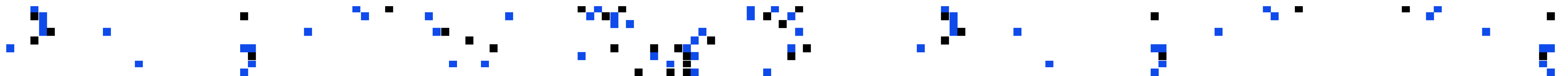
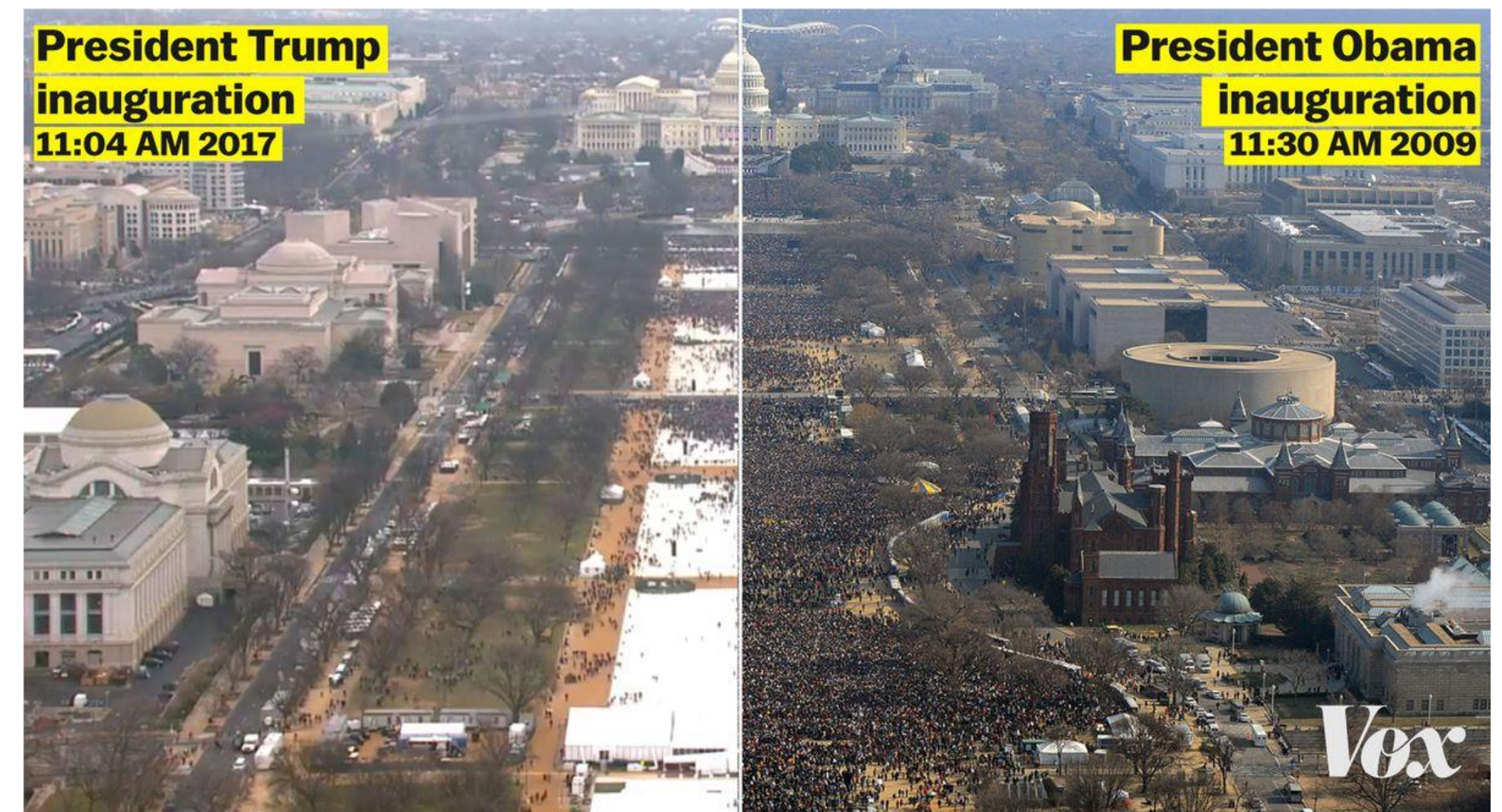
Knowledge-driven: existence sets up pressure for use and development of policy

Problem-solving: direct application of data to pending decision

Enlightenment: indirect influence of data, rather than direct impact in policy-making process

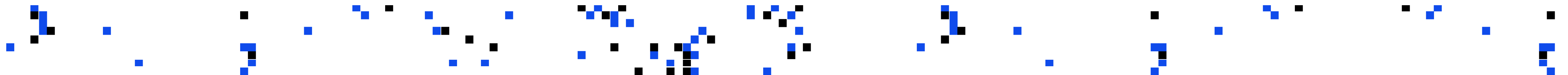
Interactive: data just one form of knowledge used including experience, political insight, pressure, social technologies and judgment

Political: data to support pre-determined position



The Challenges and Enemies of Data

Challenges	Enemies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly to assemble / research capacity • Universal consensus / one way to proceed • Political imperatives / multiple interpretations / relevance to decisions • Unclear objectives / outcomes impossible to measure / rapidly changing technology • Practical constraints (ethical considerations – privacy, privacy, privacy) • Internal and external expectations policy makers will ask for, consider, and use research • Recognising interventions only sometimes work, for some people, in some contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Things have always been done this way” • Tendency for output measurement – more \neq better • Consensus-building determines the limits of a solution • Politics is about the art of the possible, not what might work best • Civil service culture – strong distrust of data created outside the service • Time – scarcely room to think, let alone gather data





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Workforce Planning in Local Government



Centre for Local Government Workforce Program

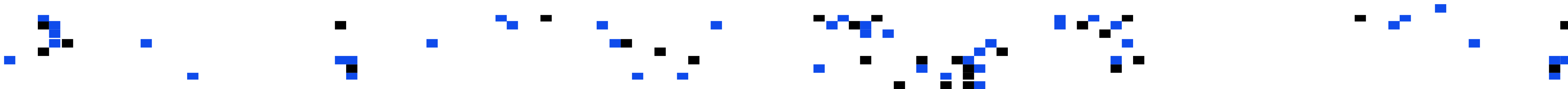
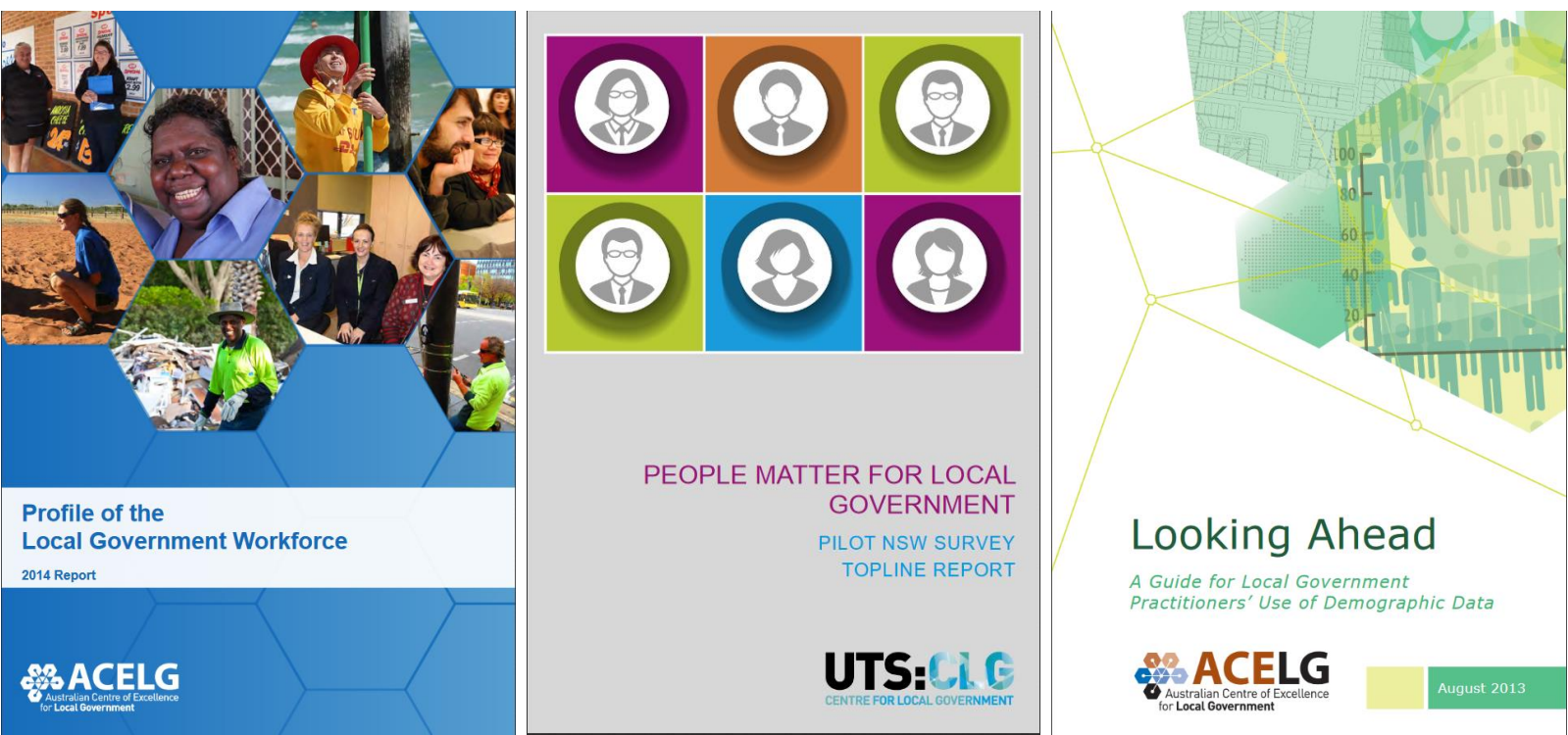
SECTOR POSITIONING



WORKFORCE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



WORKFORCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA



National Workforce Strategy

Local government requires a workforce with diverse skills to provide increasingly complex and diverse services and infrastructure

Local government can be a more capable partner by addressing key challenges in future proofing the workforce:



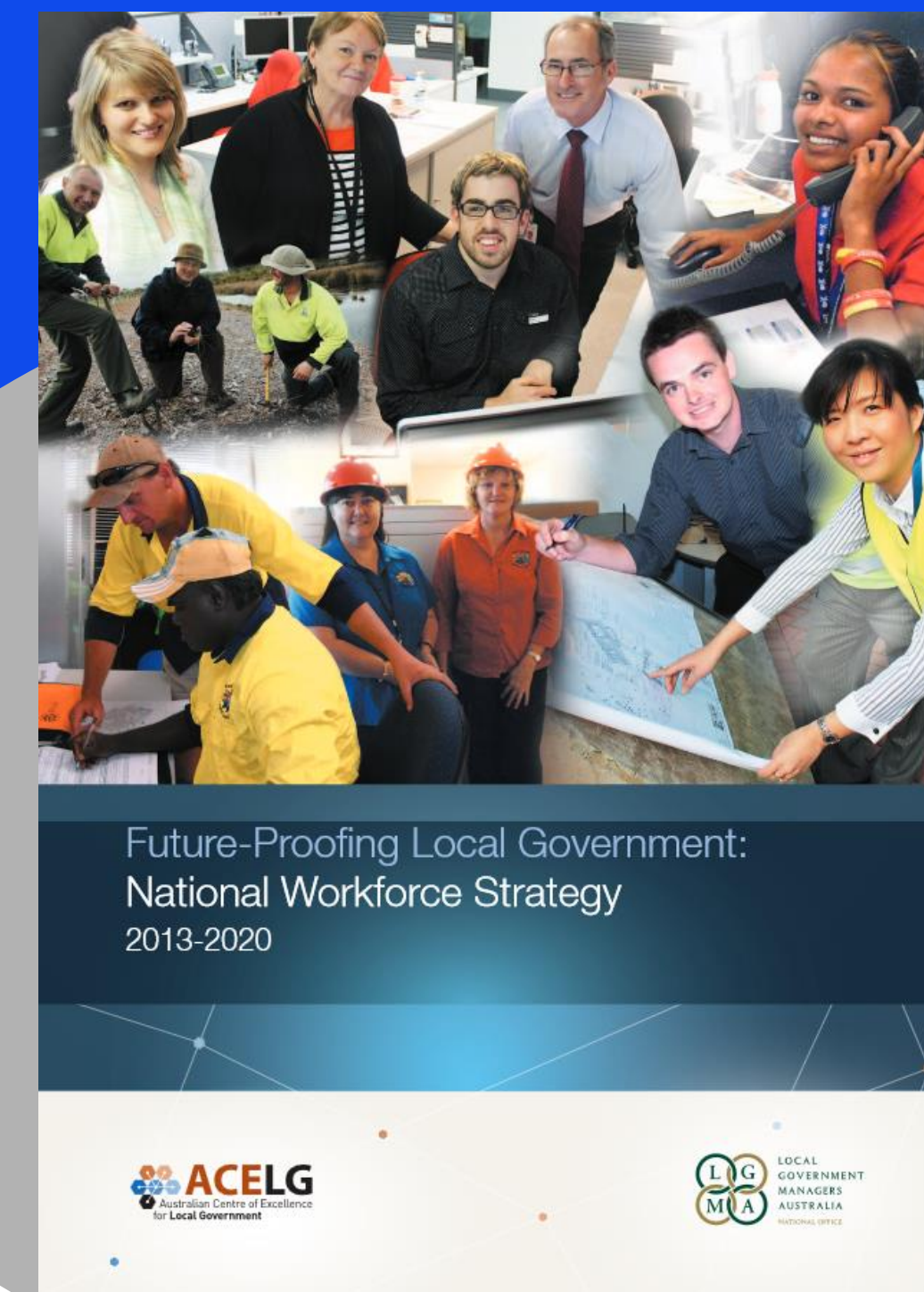
Attraction



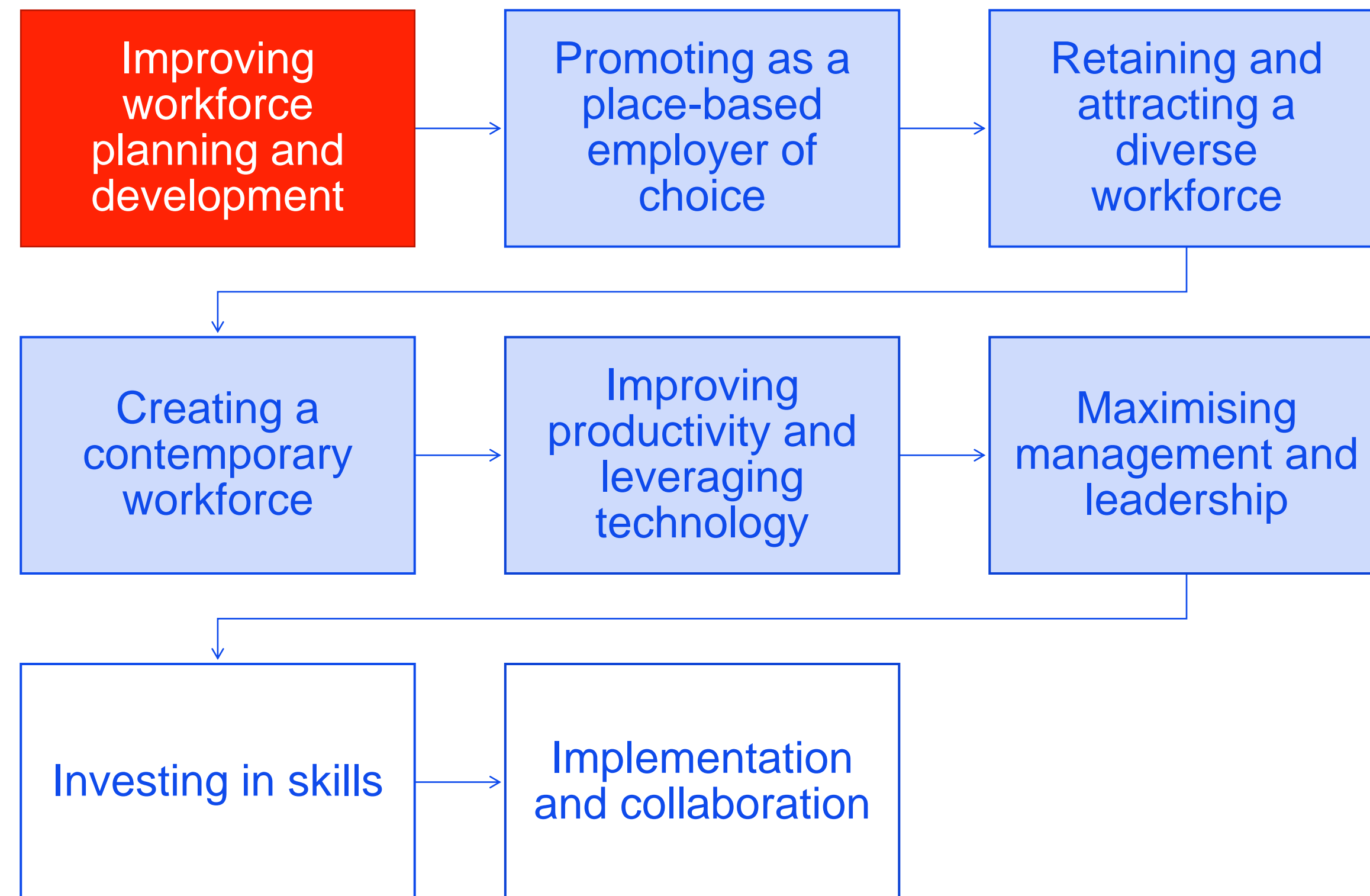
Retention



Development



National Workforce Strategy



National Workforce Strategy

Consistent approach to workforce planning and development. Builds on and reinforces existing good practices.



1

Workforce planning and development



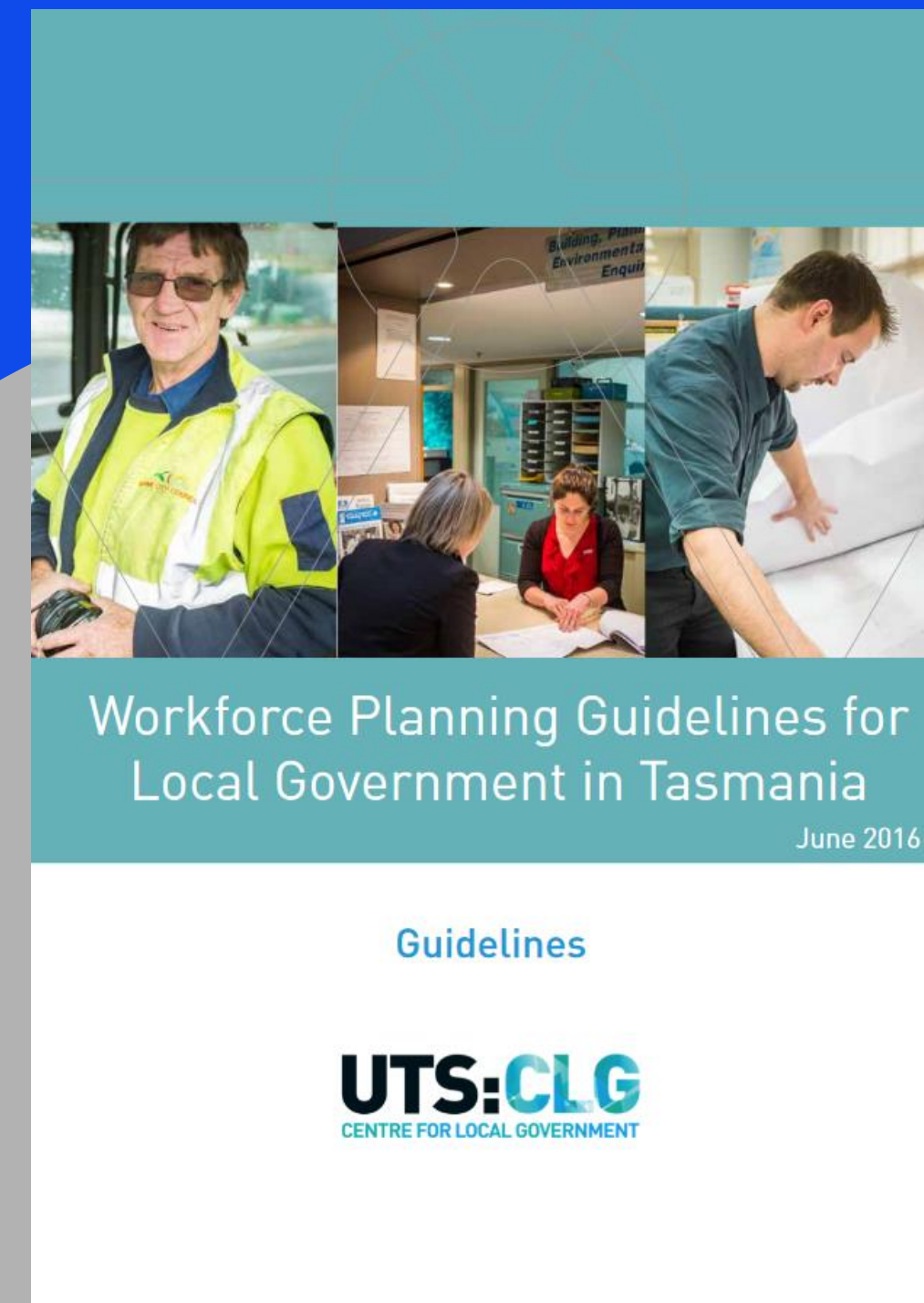
2

Data collection



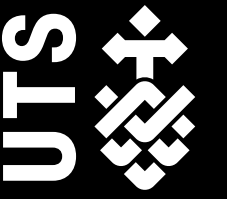
3

Skills development and capacity building



National Profile of the Local Government Workforce

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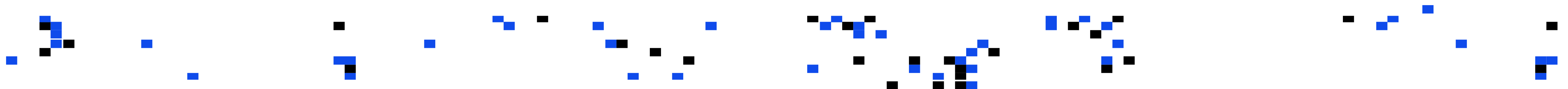
The First National Profile

+ | Australian Local Government Workforce and Employment Census

- Designed to support National Workforce Strategy
- Piloted with councils around Australia then launched November 2012 – closed late January 2013
- 232 metro, regional and rural councils representing over 67,000 – about a third of estimated total workforce

- | Some Challenges

- Poor representation from some jurisdictions - underscores importance of national approach
- Comparing results with other sources showed data could not be trusted



The First National Profile

Combined a range of data sources:

1. Council data from ALGWE 'Census'
2. ABS Census, place of work and usual residence
3. ABS Census, longitudinal database
4. ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours
5. Electoral Commissions
6. Comparative performance information from State departments of local government

ONE OF OUR MOST DOWNLOADED PUBLICATIONS



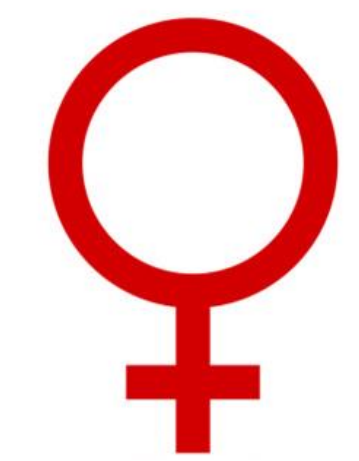
Major findings from 2011



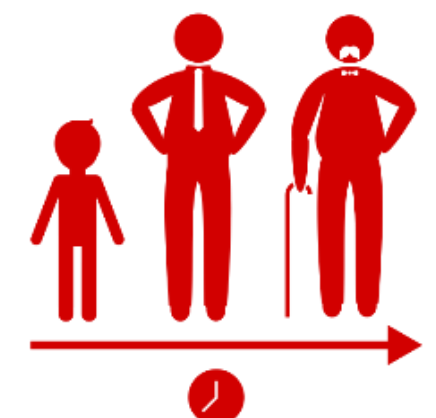
Spatial
distribution



CoAG Public Sector
Employment Targets



Female Managers
and Councillors



Ageing Workforce

5%

Place-based
employment



Attraction and
Retention



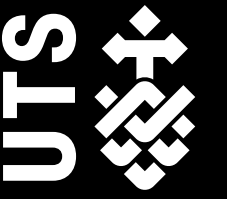
Amalgamations



Engineering and
Infrastructure

How the sector is shaping up in 2016

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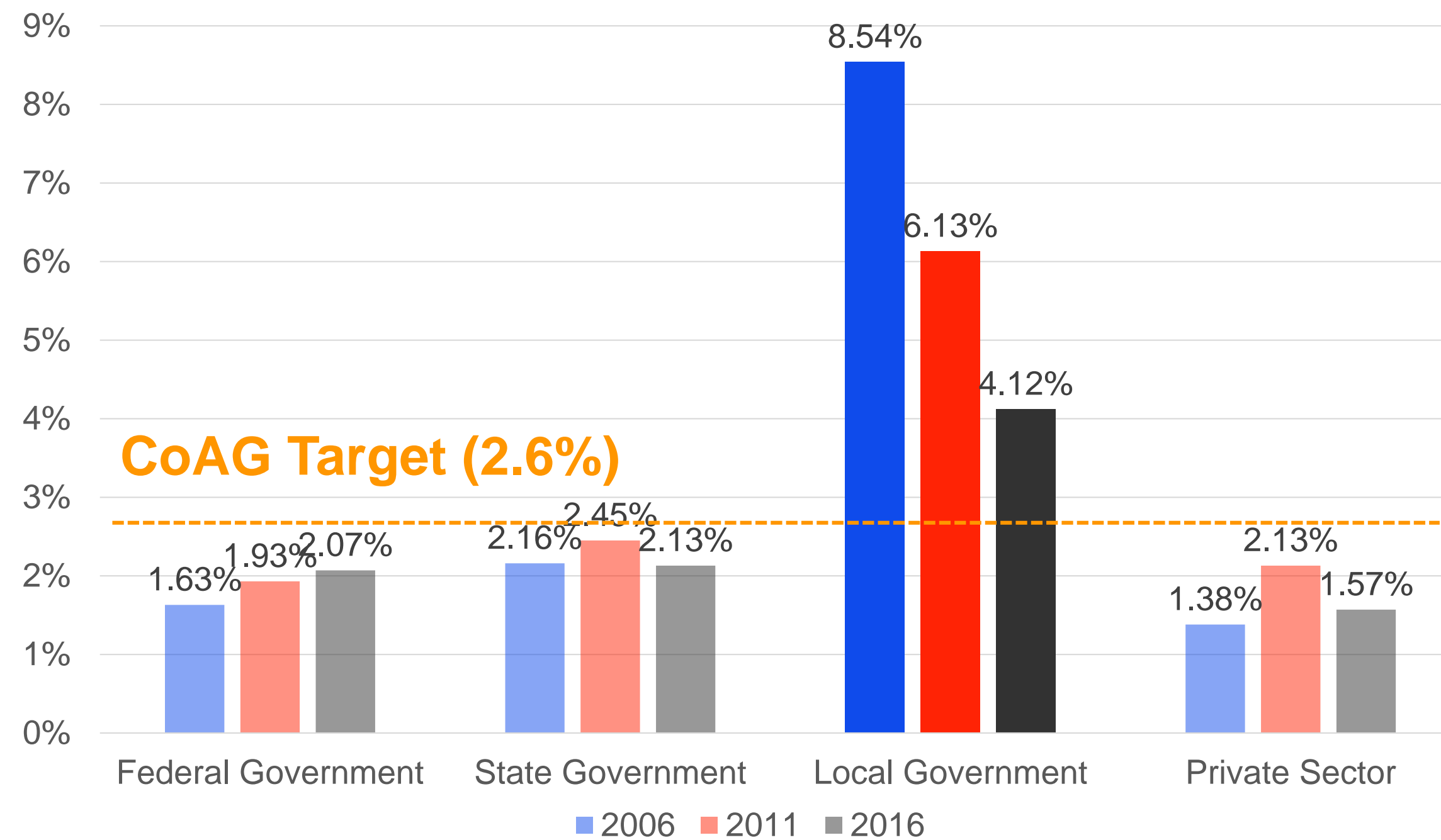
Place-based employment



Important efficiency
and productivity
implications.

Higher search costs
to find the right
people + travel to
work times.

Indigenous employment



Despite changes to the CDEP, local government still the only one to have met CoAG target for Indigenous employment in the public sector

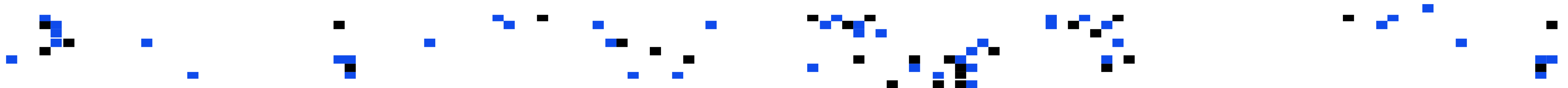
Gender equality

Local Government	2016					2011	
	Total N	% Male	% Female	% Change	N change	% Male	% Female
General Managers	556	69%	32%	8%	67	77%	24%
Finance Managers	596	57%	43%	7%	67	63%	36%
Policy and Planning Managers	837	44%	56%	6%	24	50%	50%
Research and Development Managers	173	60%	42%	11%	27	68%	31%
Construction Managers	1062	87%	13%	4%	89	91%	10%
Engineering Managers	579	90%	9%	4%	22	95%	5%
Supply, Distribution and Procurement Managers	176	69%	31%	13%	29	79%	18%

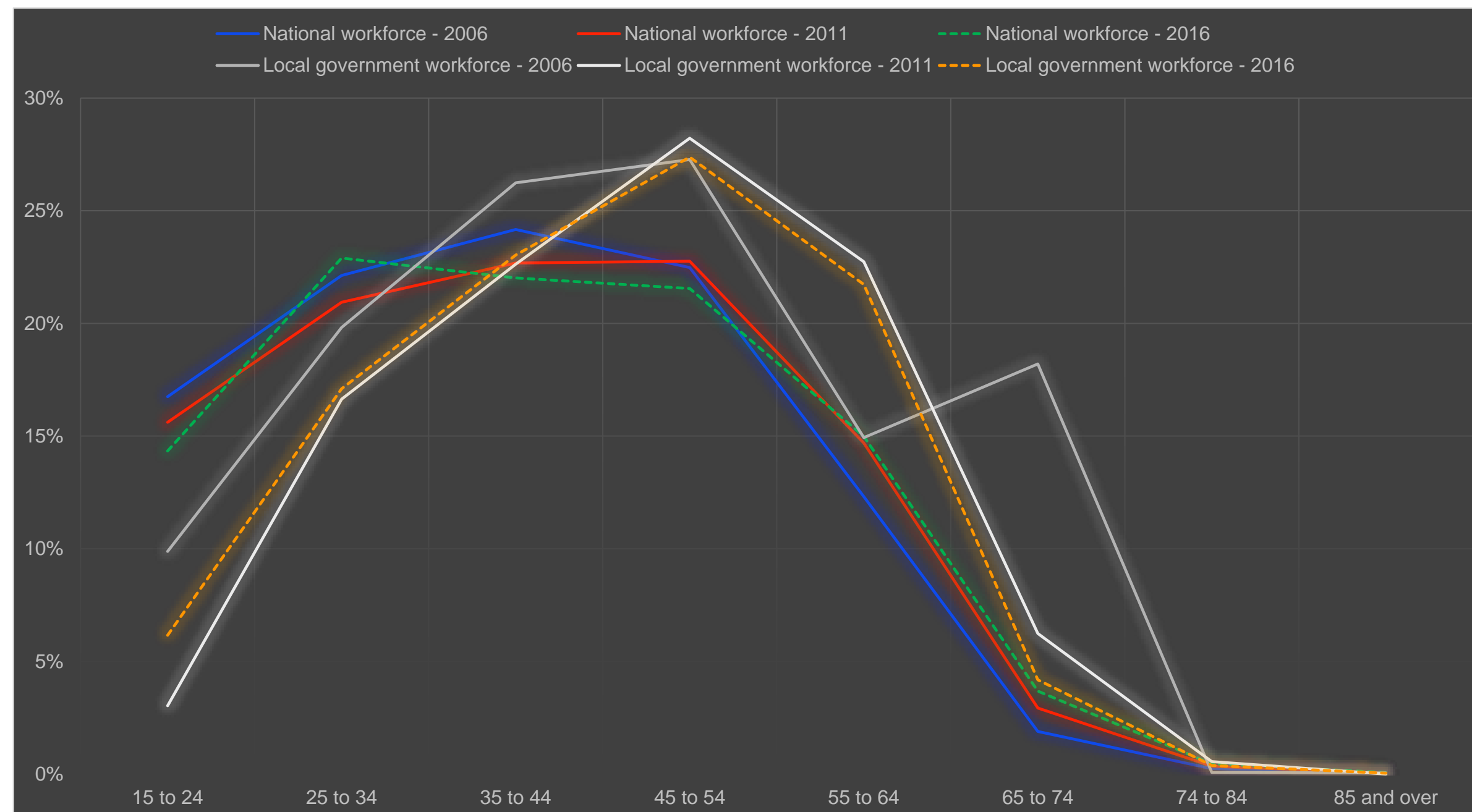
National Workforce	2016					2011	
	Total N	% Male	% Female	% Change	N Change	% Male	% Female
General Managers	110595	75%	25%	2%	7124	77%	23%
Finance Managers	47012	54%	46%	3%	3771	57%	43%
Policy and Planning Managers	21268	44%	56%	3%	2360	46%	54%
Research and Development Managers	10965	54%	46%	4%	1130	58%	42%
Construction Managers	92380	93%	7%	1%	2466	94%	6%
Engineering Managers	15421	91%	9%	1%	-76	92%	8%
Supply, Distribution and Procurement Managers	32553	78%	22%	8%	475	86%	14%

Local government closer to the gender equality boundary when compared to national workforce.

As older, male senior execs retire, they are being replaced by highly skilled women.



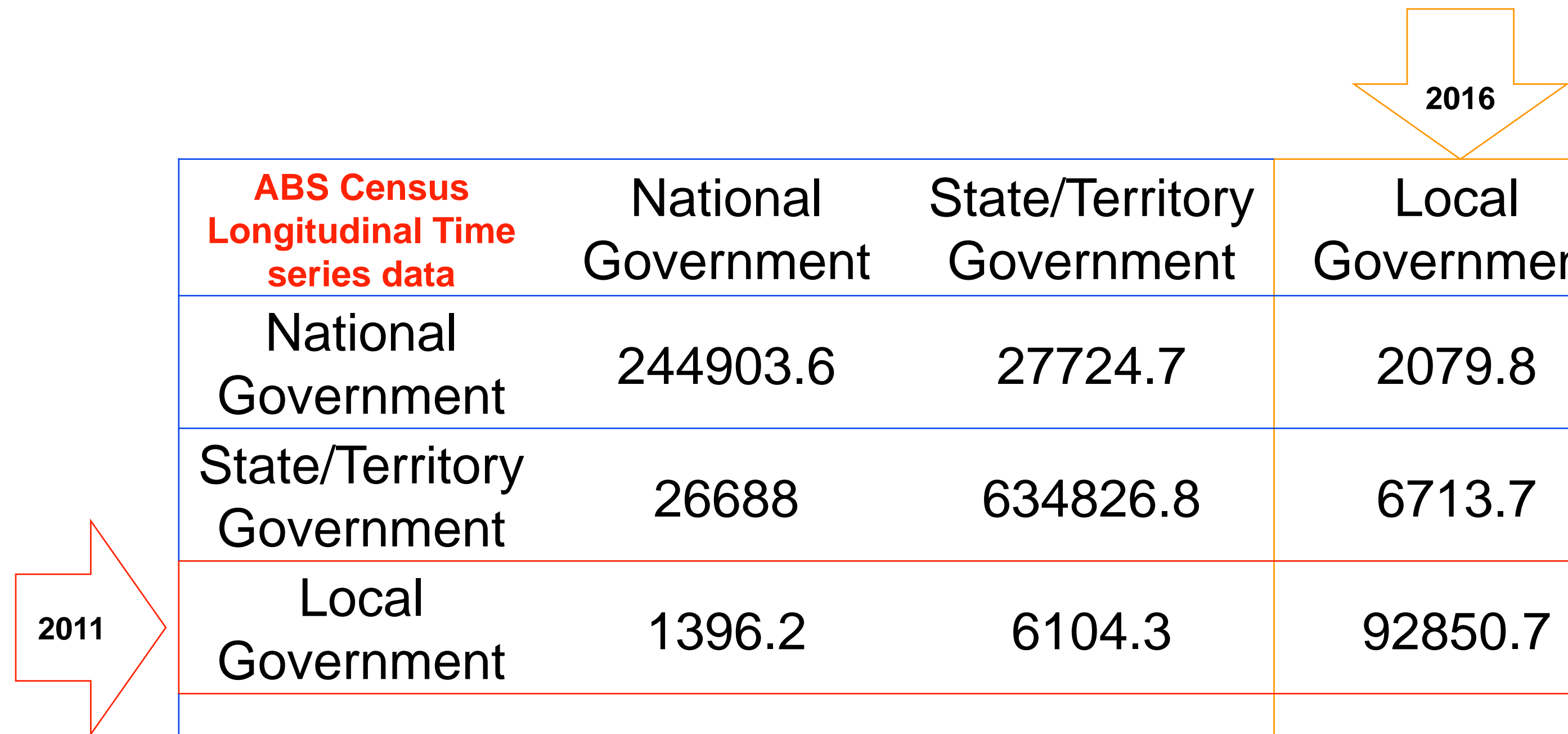
Ageing workforce



Local government is at the forefront of the retirement wave sweeping across the national workforce. Implications for:

- Retaining corporate memory, skills development and transfer
- Recruitment and retention strategies
- Promoting local government as an employer of choice
- Superannuation liabilities

Time series data: loss, attraction and retention rates



ABS Census Longitudinal Time series data	National Government	State/Territory Government	Local Government	Private sector	Total
National Government	244903.6	27724.7	2079.8	83361	358251.4
State/Territory Government	26688	634826.8	6713.7	248335.9	916603.9
Local Government	1396.2	6104.3	92850.7	33748.6	134102
Private sector	111843.1	331310.3	49689.8	6715798.8	7208873.8
Total	384925.5	1000029.1	151338	7081335.7	8617653.2

Losses, attraction and retention

Employees retained 2011-16



Federal
Government

68%



State
Government

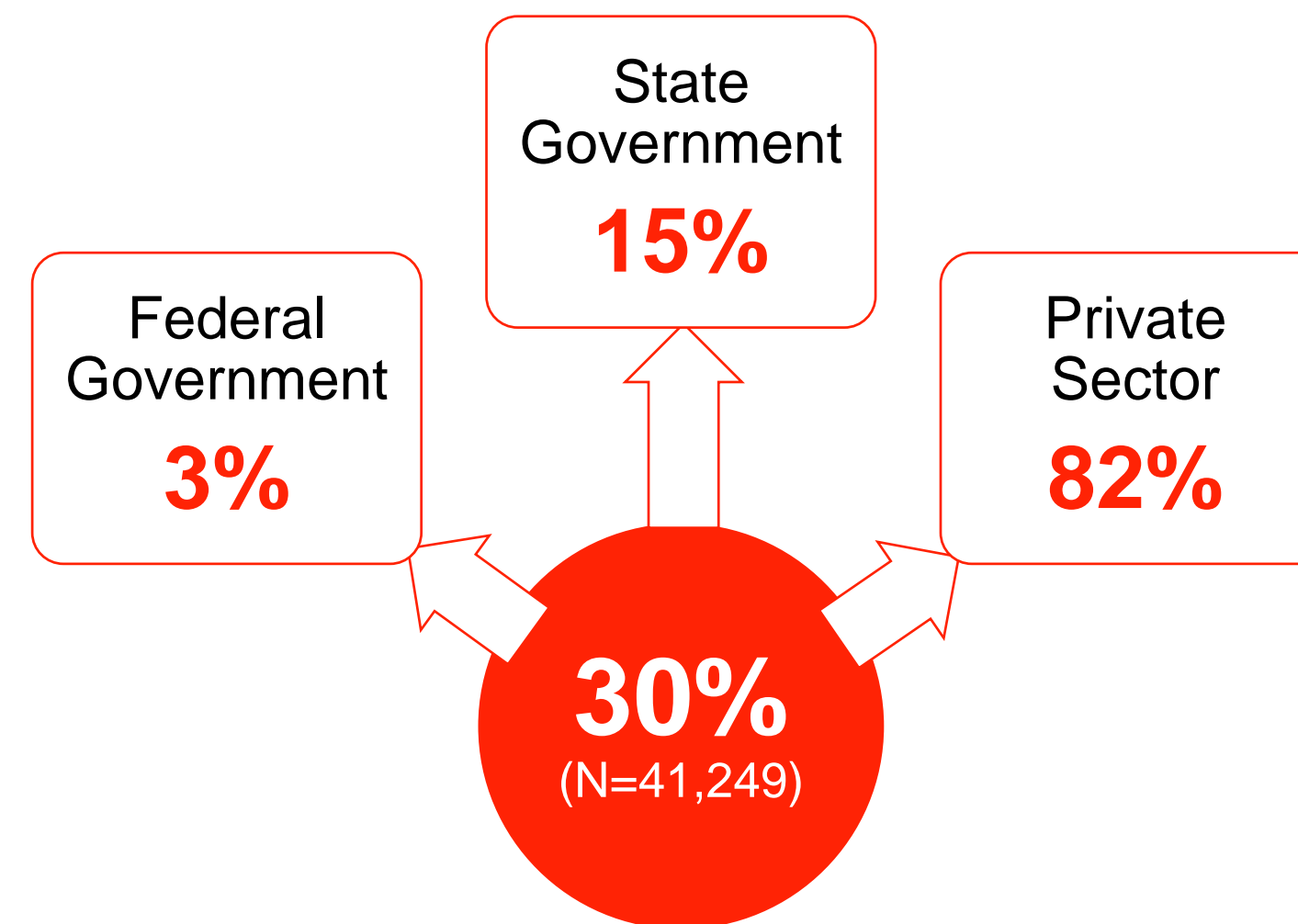
69%



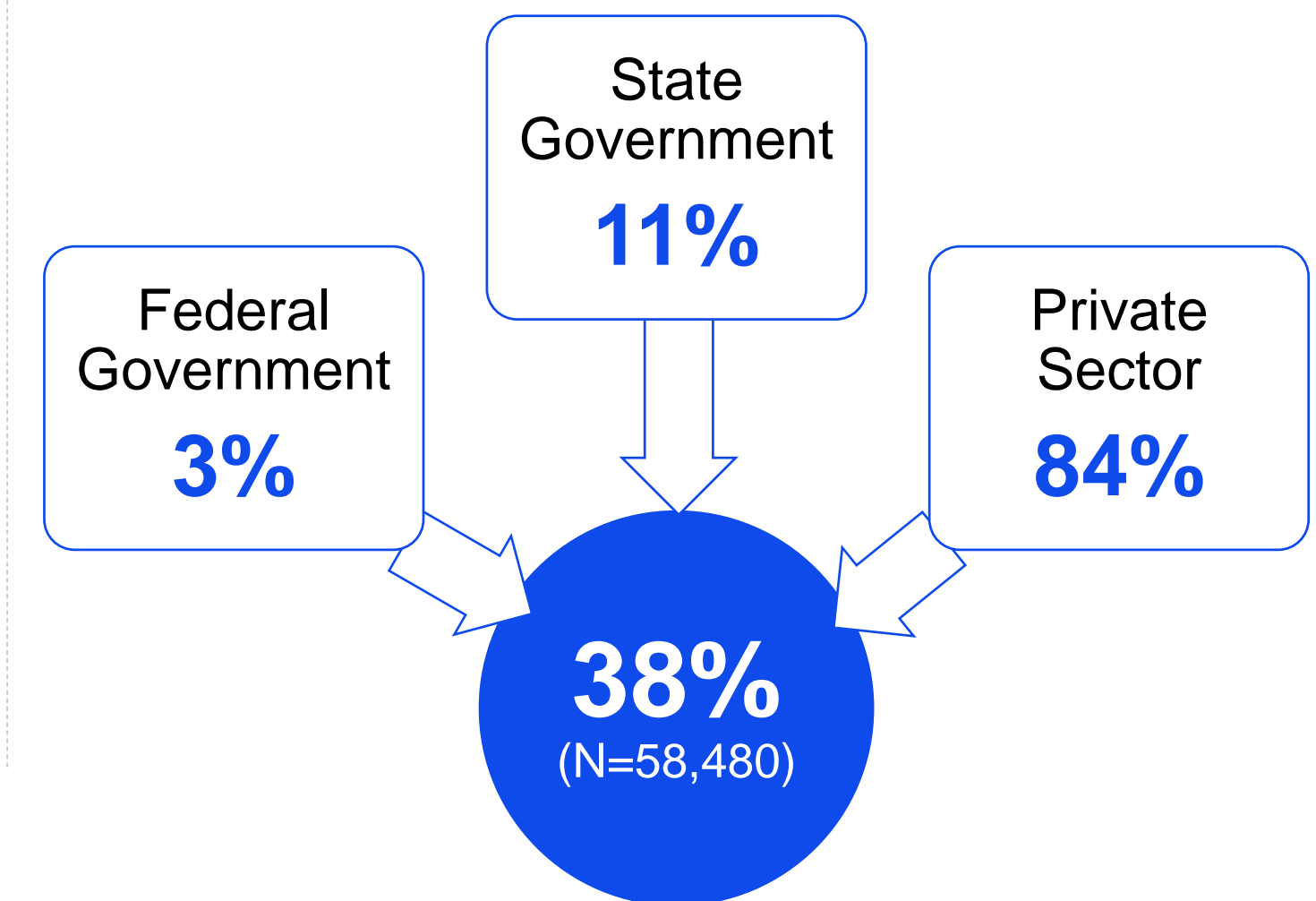
Local
Government

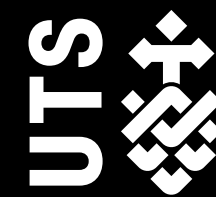
69%

Employees lost 2011-16



Employees gained 2011-16





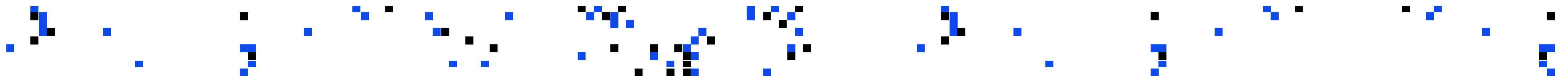
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The Take Homes



The Take Homes

- 1.Data on its own cannot capture the complexity of the problems governments deal with, why these exist, and the outcomes governments deliver.
- 2.Data can be a force for good but most of the data we collect isn't used. Data is, and will be increasingly, contested because of declining trust in government.
- 3.Data should be seen as just one tool in the policy and decision-making toolbox. It is not a panacea.
- 4.Data on the local government workforce has shined a light on impending challenges for the sector and some good news stories.
- 5.Improving workforce planning a key challenge for the sector – good data supported by robust policy frameworks crucial.



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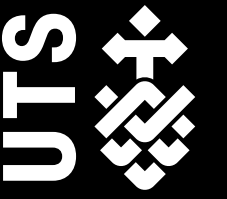
University of Technology Sydney

15 Broadway, Ultimo, NSW 2007

02 9514 7884

ippg@uts.edu.au

ippg.uts.edu.au



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