



## DR SAMANTHA ABBATO

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### PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Sam Abbato is a passionate and creative evaluator, researcher, and trainer with more than 25 years of experience working across various evaluation contracts for non-government, government, and universities. With a depth of knowledge of the health and community sectors, working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Sam manages teams of evaluators across various projects. Sam applies participatory and use-focused approaches to organisational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and evaluation capacity-building (ECB). Effectively working with organisational leadership, service delivery staff, and a range of transdisciplinary collaborators, she embeds evaluation and builds the evaluation capacity of organisations.

Sam directs the multidisciplinary team at Visual Insights People and applies a 'pictures and stories' approach to solving the challenges of communicating, engaging, and implementing M&E with organisational leadership and service delivery teams. She is a passionate and skilled evaluation trainer committed to rigorous methods, effective communication, and making evaluation tools accessible to all. Sam provides regular face-to-face and online presentations, individual training, and team training packages with Visual Insights and the Australian Evaluation Society (AES).

### OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND EXPERIENCE

- Director, Visual Insights People (2013 - current)
- Lead consultant, Samantha Abbato and Associates (2005 - current)
- Freelance writer and researcher, Magazine media (2001-2005)
- Statistical analysis and interpretation, Deakin University (2000-2001)
- Lecturer and Researcher, Epidemiology and Anthropology, Public Health, University of Queensland (1998-2000)
- PhD research partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) - "Questionnaire development in epidemiology: A case study - The social epidemiology of diabetes in Melbourne Aborigines." (1994-1997)
- Tutor and teaching assistant, University of California at Berkeley (1993)
- Research assistant, Center for Disease Control, Western Consortium of Public Health, San Francisco and Oakland, California (1990-1993)
- Research officer, Food and Nutrition Program and AIDS/STD Unit, Deakin University and Health and Human Services, Victoria (1989-1990)

### RECENT PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Abbato, S. (Accepted July 2022) Digital evaluation stories: A case study of implementation for monitoring and evaluation in an Australian Community not for profit, *American Journal of Evaluation*.

Abbato, S., Ryan, J., Skelly, C., & Good, P. (2018) The other side of "getting by": A case study of interpreting provision decision-making and consequences for patients. *Cogent Medicine*, 5(1), 1-17.

Abbato, S. (2015) The case for evaluating process and worth: Evaluation of a programme for carers and people with dementia. In *Case Study Evaluation: Past, Present and Future*, Eds. Greenhalgh, T., Russell, J. & Kushner, S.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- PhD Epidemiology  
University of California – Berkeley, 1997
- MPH Epidemiology/Biostatistics,  
University of California - Berkeley, 1992
- BSc (Hons) Physiology, Pure  
Mathematics, Monash University, 1989

### RECENT AWARDS

Excellence in Evaluation - The Caulley  
Tulloch (Publication) Award AES, 2015

### KEY SKILLS

- Transdisciplinary teamwork, coordinating professionals (e.g., psychology, graphic communication, systems thinking, film, animation)
- Qualitative evaluation/research methods including case study, ethnography, storytelling, interview
- Quantitative evaluation/research methods including surveys, statistical analysis, and database problem-solving
- Visual participatory approaches, including digital evaluation story and virtual reality animation storytelling
- Communication for engagement and impact using pictures and stories
- Evaluation training, coaching, and mentoring (online and face-to-face)
- Evaluation capacity-building (ECB) using visual tools (video, graphic communication, checklists)

### MEMBERSHIPS

- Australian Evaluation Society (AES)
- American Evaluation Association (AEA)
- Brisbane Business Psychology Book Club (Founder 2016)

## CONSULTANCY ACHIEVEMENTS (2007 - 2022)

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### Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

#### Strategic Planning and Evaluation Workshop Series (2022)

Provision of a series of three face-to-face workshops with staff and board members to guide the overarching framework for strategic planning and evaluation using a storytelling approach and creative multidisciplinary tools including participatory video and art, cartooning, and visual recording.

### Disability Voices Tasmania

#### Evaluation Capability Training and Codesign of Organisation and Project Evaluation Models (2022)

1. Evaluation capability-building training with the staff team of four using a physical and online toolkit, online workshops, online collaboration between workshops, and one-to-one coaching.
2. Codesign of three sets of theory of change and pipeline program logic models for project work.
3. Collaborative creation of the organisation's strategic plan and a visual, graphic communicated theory of change for the organisation.

### The Healing Foundation and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)

#### WorkUP Queensland Evaluation (2019-2022)

1. Collaborative development of an evaluation framework and plan for the domestic and family violence, sexual violence and women's health and wellbeing workforce capability and capacity-building project.
2. Digital storytelling evaluation of WorkUP including project staff capacity-building in digital and qualitative interviewing skills.
3. Audit of quantitative data with report on recommendations for quantitative data collection, management, and analysis.
4. Evaluation reporting including a 20-minute film report, an interactive geographical story map incorporating 24 change film vignettes, and interactive theory of change version of film vignettes, a three-page executive summary.

### The Healing Foundation - Queensland

#### Codesigned Evaluation Framework and Evaluation Capability Training (2021-2022)

1. Facilitation of the co-design of The Healing Foundation Evaluation Framework incorporating online and face-to-face meetings and workshops with leaders across the organisation.
2. Evaluation capability-building training with two internal facilitators, supporting the face-to-face and online training of a team of nine staff members across the organisation in six sessions of Evaluation Made Easy.

### CatholicCare N.T., Northern Territory

#### Organisational Outcomes Evaluation and Evaluation Capacity-Building (2015-2021)

1. Codesign and implementation of an organisational monitoring and evaluation system in partnership with the organisation's leadership, featuring a digital evaluation story and a participant-centred approach.
2. Evaluation capacity-building across diverse geographic sites, incorporating a multidisciplinary approach including organisational psychology, systems thinking, graphic communication, videography, and virtual reality.
3. Directed a multidisciplinary team for the codesign of a visual evaluation capacity-building toolkit, including instructional booklets and videos featuring leaders and staff across the organisation.
4. Directed a series of three participatory videos (including virtual reality animation) documenting the transformation of the organisation to one with participants and evaluation at the centre.
5. Provision of practical insights for evaluators and organisations considering digital storytelling and other film narrative methods for participant-centred evaluation through a peer-reviewed publication (2022).
6. Workshops in theory of change, qualitative interviewing, qualitative sampling, survey administration, digital interviews (personal and technical), and editing digital products for staff and leaders across diverse regions of the Northern Territory.

## CONSULTANCIES *CONT*

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### **Dorset County Council, United Kingdom**

#### **Stepping into Nature (SiN) Evaluation (2017-2020)**

Evaluation development, guiding evaluation, and team capacity-building for a three- year project to improve the wellbeing of older people and people with dementia through increasing connection to green spaces, people and meaning. Development of evaluation framework, plan, and tools incorporating visual components. This incorporated skill building of Public Health Dorset and partners through face-to-face and online workshops over three consecutive years.

### **Mater Health Services Brisbane, Queensland**

#### **Evaluation, Research, and Strategic Planning (2009-2019)**

1. CALD consumer engagement/feedback.
2. Establish M&E system for Refugee Health Qld.
3. Facilitation of Pastoral Care and ATSI strategic plans.
4. Establish M&E system for Cultural Diversity Unit and coaching in implementing it.
5. Audit of interpreting provision (2013-4) and research publication.
6. Qualitative study to elicit reasons for low interpreting rates and key actions for change and research publication.
7. Pilot evaluation of a Music Therapy program for cancer patients.
8. Qualitative action-research study of cultural and interpreting needs and strategies and plan the transition of the Mater Mothers from antenatal and birth to postnatal care.

### **Maranoa Regional Council, Queensland**

#### **Evaluation and Partnership Capacity-Building- Healthy Communities (2010-2018)**

1. Evaluation of pilot Healthy Community Initiative and evaluation training.
2. Evaluation of Healthy Community Initiative and site capacity-building.
3. Facilitation of strategic and operational plan and support in implementation.
4. Development and implementation of M&E framework and plan with partners.
5. Annual leadership/partnership capacity-building and planning workshops.

### **Dementia Australia, NSW**

#### **Participatory Evaluation and Community Resource Development (2012-2017)**

1. Evaluation of Mind Your Mind education.
2. Evaluation of Mobile Respite Team service.
3. Evaluation of Every Bloke Needs a Shed project.
4. Development of Dementia manual for Men's Sheds.
5. Evaluation of Community Cafes initiative.
6. Development of Toolkit for Community Cafes.
7. Outcomes framework and capacity-building in M&E for Insights into Hospital Experience of Dementia project across nine sites, NSW.

### **Canterbury City Council, NSW**

#### **Evaluation of Healthy Communities Initiative (2012-2014)**

Mixed method evaluation and capacity-building of program staff and partners.

### **Hepatitis Queensland**

#### **Organisation and Program Evaluation and Capacity-Building (2012-2015)**

1. Evaluation of ABC of Hepatitis Training program and project team capacity-building.
2. Organisation evaluation and staff capacity-building.
3. Evaluation of Treatment in Injecting Drug Environment (TIDE).

## CONSULTANCIES *CONT*

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### Queensland Health

#### Evaluation and Resource Development for Multicultural Services (2009-2011)

1. Evaluation of workplace diversity training.
2. Development of M&E for cross culture training.
3. Development of cultural diversity profiles for healthcare workers.

### Queensland Department of Community Safety

#### Queensland Corrective Services Bridging the Gap Evaluation (2011-2012)

Mixed method evaluation of the Bridging the Gap Pilot project for cognitively impaired prisoners. This included 25 in-depth interviews with prisoners with cognitive impairment.

### Anglicare, Queensland

#### Needs Analysis of Emerging CALD Communities (2011)

Identification of emerging ageing CALD populations regionally and community consultation of Aged care needs.

### Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing

#### Evaluation and Strategic Planning (2008-2009)

1. Organisation evaluation.
2. Facilitation of strategic and operational plan.
3. Establish M&E system for organisation.
4. Evaluation of African youth peer-mentoring project.

### Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)

#### Evaluation (2007-2008)

1. Evaluation of NEXUS Suicide Prevention program for refugee youth.
2. Development and implementation of methodology for self-assessment of Organisation against National Standards.

### Health and Community Services Workforce Council

#### Evaluation (2008)

Development of strategic framework for annual evaluation and capacity-building of project staff in evaluation.

### Gold Coast Division of General Practice

#### Regional Evaluation (2007-2008)

Evaluation of the role of NGOs in chronic disease for Gold Coast Division of General Practice.

## TRAINING AND TEACHING DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION

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### Australian Evaluation Association

#### Professional Learning Workshops - Full-day Equivalent Online and Face-to-Face (2011-2022)

Making it Stick 1 - Crafting an evaluation report for impact and use (Aug 2017, Nov 2017, Sep 2018, Sep 2020, Feb 2022)

Making it Stick 2 - Impactful reporting and beyond: Pictures and stories (Aug 2017, Sep 2019, Oct 2020, Mar 2022)

Making it Stick 3 - Visual storytelling with numbers (Jul 2021, May 2022)

Making it Digital 1 - A practical introduction to using film for evaluation reporting (May 2021)

Outcome Evaluation Basics - Questions, models, and pathways (Jun 2020, Aug 2020)

Essentials of qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluation (May 2019)

Systems Thinking for Complex Evaluation (Sep 2015)

Learn Conversational Statistics: Making evaluation more influential by learning how to reason, think, and speak the language of statistics (Aug 2011)

## TRAINING DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION *CONT*

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### Visual Insights People

#### Facilitator Training - Online and Face-to-Face (2020-2022)

Evaluation Made Easy for Facilitators - Six session evaluation basics course (Nov 2021 - Feb 2022)

#### Participant Training - Online (2020-2022)

Theory of change - Build your model - Six session program model course (Nov 2020 - Jan 2021)

Evaluation Made Easy for participants - Six session evaluation basics course (Mar- Jun 2022)

### Community Service Industry Alliance (CSIA), Queensland

#### Workshops Provided for Information, Linkages and Capacity-Building Project- Inclusion Readiness (2018-2019)

Stories of Change to Theory of Change - Six two-day workshops in locations across Queensland (Jul-Sep 2018)

Critique and Application of Theory of Change- Five follow-up Alumni workshops (Feb-Mar 2019)

Stories of Change to Theory of Change - Five special cohort workshops (Jun-Aug 2019)

### Public Health Dorset, England

#### Evaluation Workshop Series (2017-2020)

Series 1 - Quantitative Measures for Evaluation, Qualitative Methods for Evaluation, Theory of Change (2017)

Series 2 - Theory of Change, Qualitative Methods, Digital Evaluation Methods (2018)

Series 3 - Making it Stick, Pathways for Evaluation, Qualitative Methods, Advanced Theory of Change (2020)

### University of Queensland

#### Evaluating Social Programs Course (2010)

Using Program Evaluation Tools (Mar, Aug 2010)

#### Postgraduate Masters' Program, International and Tropic Health (1999 - 2000)

Lecturer, Qualitative Methods (Jul 1999 - Jun 2000)

#### Postgraduate Masters' Program, School of Population Health (1998-1999)

Lecturer, Epidemiology (Jul 1998 - Jun 1999)

#### For Faculty of Public Health, Khon Kaen University, Thailand (1999)

Five-day workshop series - Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods (May 1999)

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND SEMINARS (SINCE 2009)

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**Abbato, S.** Using Film Methods – Is Evaluation missing an opportunity? AES Queensland Seminar, Online, 5 May 2022.

**Abbato, S.** What keeps me awake at night! Navigating ethical dilemmas in evaluation, In Evaluators Navigating Ethics, AES Online Conference FestEVAL, 15 September 2021.

**Abbato, S.** & MacGregor, M. Digital Evaluation Story: A case-study of its use for monitoring and evaluation by an NT community organisation. NT Regional Seminar, Online, 3 December 2020.

**Abbato, S.**, MacGregor, M., Young, L., Pastor, S., Burns, K. Movies, art and virtual reality: Innovative evaluation story methods. Presentation for the Australian Evaluation Society 2019 International Conference, Sydney 16 September 2019.

**Abbato, S.**, MacGregor, M., Pastor, S., Young, L, Burns, K. The evaluation toolbox needs pictures: A multidisciplinary approach to ECB. Presentation for the Australian Evaluation Society 2019 International Conference, Sydney 16 September 2019.

**Abbato, S.** Effectively communicating evaluation: The Evaluation report and beyond. Presentation for Australasian Evaluation Society, Brisbane, June 5, 2017.

**Abbato, S.** Presentation to the Mater Health Services Executive on “Why is there a low rate of interpreter engagement at the Mater Hospital ED and Inpatient Wards: The results of an explanatory Case Study of Interpreter Provision, March 1 2016.



## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND SEMINARS (SINCE 2009) *CONT*

- Abbato S.** What does the evaluator mean? Understanding evaluation reports and applying the findings to policy and practice. Presentation for Australasian Evaluation Society, Brisbane. April 22 2015.
- Torrance, S, **Abbato, S** and O’Loughlin, S. How to use the “Your Shed and Dementia” manual. Workshop for the 6th National Conference of the Australian Men’s Shed Association, Newcastle, 20 October 2015.
- Abbato, S.** Your Shed and dementia: From local stories to a National Intervention. Presented at the Australasian Evaluation Society International Evaluation Conference, Melbourne, 7 September 2015.
- Abbato, S.** Telling stories that stand up: The use of case studies in Evaluation. Australasian Evaluation Conference, Brisbane, September 4-6, 2013.
- Abbato, S.** Getting the best results from evaluation statistics by asking the right questions. Brisbane AES Seminar 25 August 2011.
- Abbato, S.** Program Logic: The good, the bad and the completely illogical. Brisbane AES Seminar 19 November 2009.

## PUBLICATIONS (NEE THOMPSON)

- Abbato, S.** (*Accepted July 2022*). Digital evaluation stories: A case study of implementation for monitoring and evaluation in an Australian Community not for profit, *American Journal of Evaluation*.
- Abbato, S.,** Greer, R., Ryan, J., Vayne-Bossert, P., Good, P. (2019). The impact of professional language interpretation on length of stay and readmission rates in an acute care hospital setting, *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 21(5): 965-970.
- Abbato, S.,** Ryan, J., Skelly, C., and Good, P. (2018). The other side of “getting by”: A case study of interpreting provision decision-making and consequences for patients. *Cogent Medicine*, 5 (1), 1-17.
- Ryan, J., **Abbato, S.,** Greer, R., Vayne-Bossert, P, Good, P. (2017). Rates and Predictors of Professional Interpreting Provision for Patients With Limited English Proficiency in the Emergency Department and Inpatient Ward. *Inquiry*.
- Abbato S.** (2015). The case for evaluating process and worth: Evaluation of a programme for carers and people with dementia. In *Case study evaluation: Past, present and future*, Eds. Greenhalgh T, Russell J and Kushner S.
- Abbato S.** (2019). Book Review: Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioural Sciences. Authors: Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori. *Evaluation Journal of Australia*, 9 (2).
- Thompson S.,** Hartel G, Manderson L, Woelz-Stirling N., & Kelaher M. (2002). The mental health status of Filipinas in Queensland. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 36:674-680.
- Thompson S.,** Manderson L., Woelz-Stirling N, Cahill A and Kelaher M. (2002) The social and cultural context of the mental health of Filipinas in Queensland. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 36:681-687.
- Thompson S.,** Gifford S., & Thorpe L.(2000). The social and cultural context of risk and prevention: Diabetes in an urban Aboriginal community. *Health Education and Behavior*, 27(6) 725-743.
- Thompson S** and Gifford S.(2000). Trying to keep a balance: The meaning of health and diabetes in an urban Aboriginal community. *Social Science and Medicine*, 51(10) 1457-1472.
- Thompson S.** (2000). Community-based epidemiology: The methods of the Living with Diabetes Project. *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*, 19(1) 3- 18.
- Thompson, S.,** Ringuet, C., Williams, G., Kelaher, M., Baigrie, N., Jenkins, D., & Chapman, B (2000). Getting fit for the community: The Cherbourg Healthy Lifestyles Program. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal* 24(2) March/April.
- Thompson S.** & Thorpe L. (1998). The Living With Diabetes Project: A community-based approach to questionnaire development. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, Jan/Feb.
- Thompson, S.,** Gregory, J.E., Proske, U. (1990) Errors in force estimation can be explained by tendon organ desensitization, *Experimental Brain Research*, 79, 365-372.