COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

AIMS: Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA) at the University of Canberra invites you to an event that will give you an opportunity to expand the range and variety of methods you use to gather and analyse evidence for policymaking. A person with a hammer tends to just focus on finding nails to hit on the head. We want to expand your range of tools. Different social science methods can help you discover and use policy relevant evidence in a range of ways.

CONTENT: Social science has an under-appreciated range of other methods covering both quantitative and qualitative analysis. There are new forms of discovery just waiting to be found. We want you to be able to touch base with the latest best practice on the use of Systematic Reviews, Random Controlled Trials, the analysis of Big Data, design thinking, qualitative techniques for comparison using Boolean and fuzzy set logic, citizen science, the use narrative for policy makers and citizens, cluster analysis and microsimulation modelling. Of course some of the methods that we refer to have been on the shelves for a number of decades but we now know better how that to apply the method across a range of policy arenas. Other methods are relatively novel within social science but again they have been selected for attention as we have growing examples of their application in the context of policy making.

DELIVERY: The course gives you a solid base starting with a copy of a book that covers all the methods and talks about which methods to apply in which contexts. To launch our two day event and give all participants we will organise an initial morning session in the form of speed dating tables and you will have a chance to be briefed and ask questions about several methods as you move from table to table with sessions run by academics specialists in the method, accompanied in some case by policymakers who have used the method.

Thereafter in the first day afternoon you will get to explore one method is greater depth according to your interests under the guidance of an expert. The second day starts with a group exercise where you apply the method to a policy question of interest and develop your skills and understanding in an interactive manner. The event then will return in the afternoon session to the vexed issue of how to find the right method to apply to the right policy challenge. Again there will be plenty of time for discussion and debate.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The goal is that you leave the event wiser about the range of social science methods for gaining evidence with access to resources to enable you to follow up. In addition you will have worked through the application of a particular method suited to your policy challenges. Finally you will have gained a network of contacts within the University and beyond to support your development and future work.