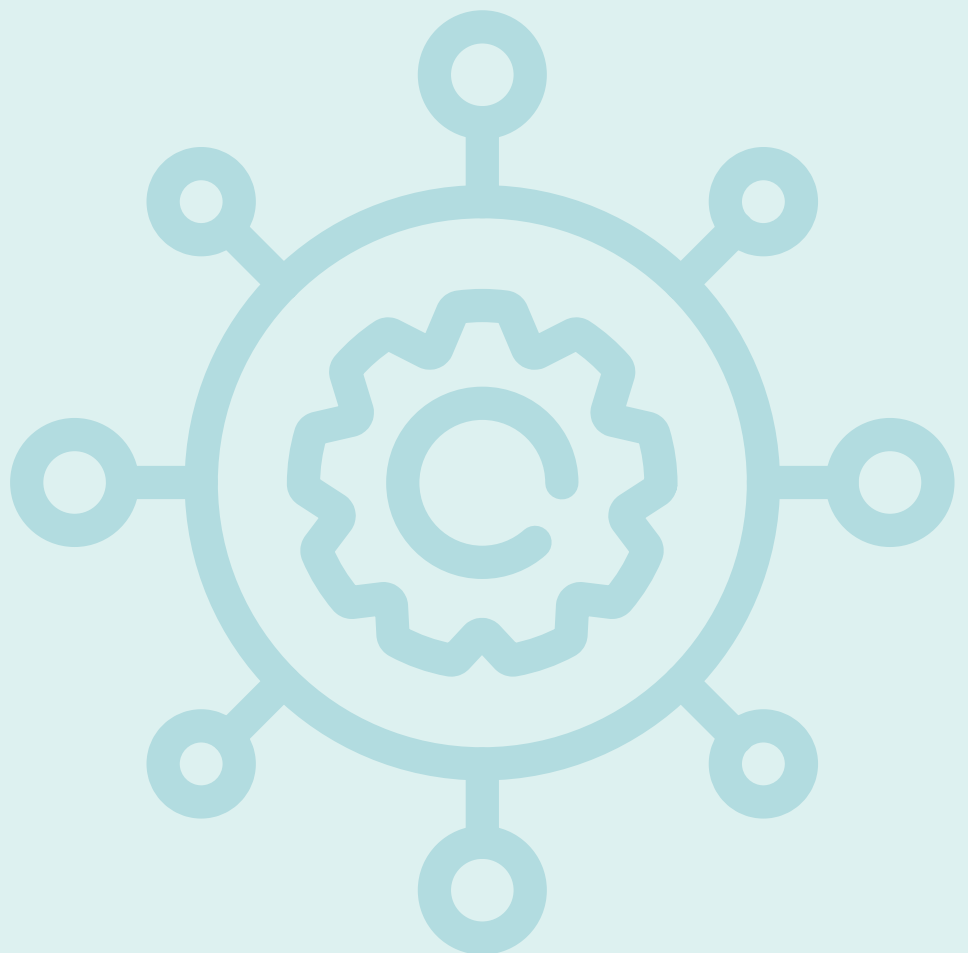


Positioning and impact framework

September 2026



Creating impact

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is Australia's national education evidence body. We work across the full evidence lifecycle, putting the best evidence to work in practice and policy across early childhood education and care (ECEC) and schooling.

We help bridge the gap between research and action so that:

- educators and decision-makers have access to high-quality evidence
- evidence is easier to understand and apply
- evidence informs policy, system improvement and professional practice.

This framework sets out how we believe our work contributes to the changes needed to achieve our vision of excellence and equity in education outcomes.



What we do and how we do it

Having impact relies on doing 3 things well and doing them together.

1. Building and strengthening the evidence-base

We generate rigorous evidence and insights and deliberately connect them to questions of policy, teaching, learning and system improvement.

2. Translating evidence into clear insights and practical resources

We translate evidence and insights into forms that are usable by governments, systems, sectors and educators.

3. Supporting adoption and implementation in real-world settings

We work with educators and decision-makers to understand how to enable evidence use and sustain change across diverse contexts.

Our ways of working help ensure our evidence is relevant, trusted and usable. We:

- engage early and often so stakeholder input shapes our priorities
- consider audience needs, intended use, adoption and uptake from the start
- embed First Nations considerations in our planning
- apply strong governance, ethics and quality assurance processes to ensure the evidence we produce can be relied on.

Our role in the national education architecture

AERO is one part of a national architecture in which many organisations work together to improve education outcomes for children and young people. While other agencies are responsible for system stewardship, regulation, accreditation and delivery, AERO's contribution is to build, strengthen and support the use of evidence.

As a part of this national architecture, AERO:

- has national reach but is responsive to jurisdictional priorities and local contexts
- uses independent methods and provides independent advice
- partners and engages with others for research, uptake and implementation so that evidence is relevant and usable in real settings
- helps connect governments, systems, sectors and educators
- contributes to national coherence by working across jurisdictions, sectors and levels of the system.

Our distinctive value

AERO's distinctive value in education research and evidence comes from the combination of the following interconnected features:

1. Our national scope across education sectors and systems

We work across ECEC and schooling, and across government, Catholic and independent sectors, connecting issues and evidence across the education continuum.

2. Our end-to-end evidence capability

We generate robust insights, synthesise and translate evidence, support implementation, and provide tailored policy and practice advice.

3. Our demand-led and partnership-based approach

We respond to system needs, policy windows and real decision-making contexts. This increases the likelihood that our evidence is timely, relevant and fit-for-purpose in policy and practice.

4. Our position in national decision-making and reform conversations

Our established role in national decision-making forums allows us to connect frontline realities, system needs and government priorities.

5. Quality, ethics and cultural legitimacy

Our strong focus on governance, quality assurance, ethics, First Nations leadership and Indigenous Data Governance helps ensure our work is trustworthy and credible.



Our theory of change

AERO's theory of change ([Figure 1](#)) explains how we contribute to change in a complex system, where education outcomes are shaped by many factors and actors. It recognises that long-term changes in teaching and outcomes for children and young people are shared across the education system and can't be attributed to a single organisation. We distinguish between what we:

- directly control (our activities and outputs)
- influence (how evidence is used)
- contribute to (longer-term outcomes for children and young people).

How we monitor our progress

In agreement with our Members and consistent with our theory of change, we assess our effectiveness based on whether our insights and resources are:

- delivered as intended
- reaching the right audiences
- relevant and usable
- informing decisions and practice.

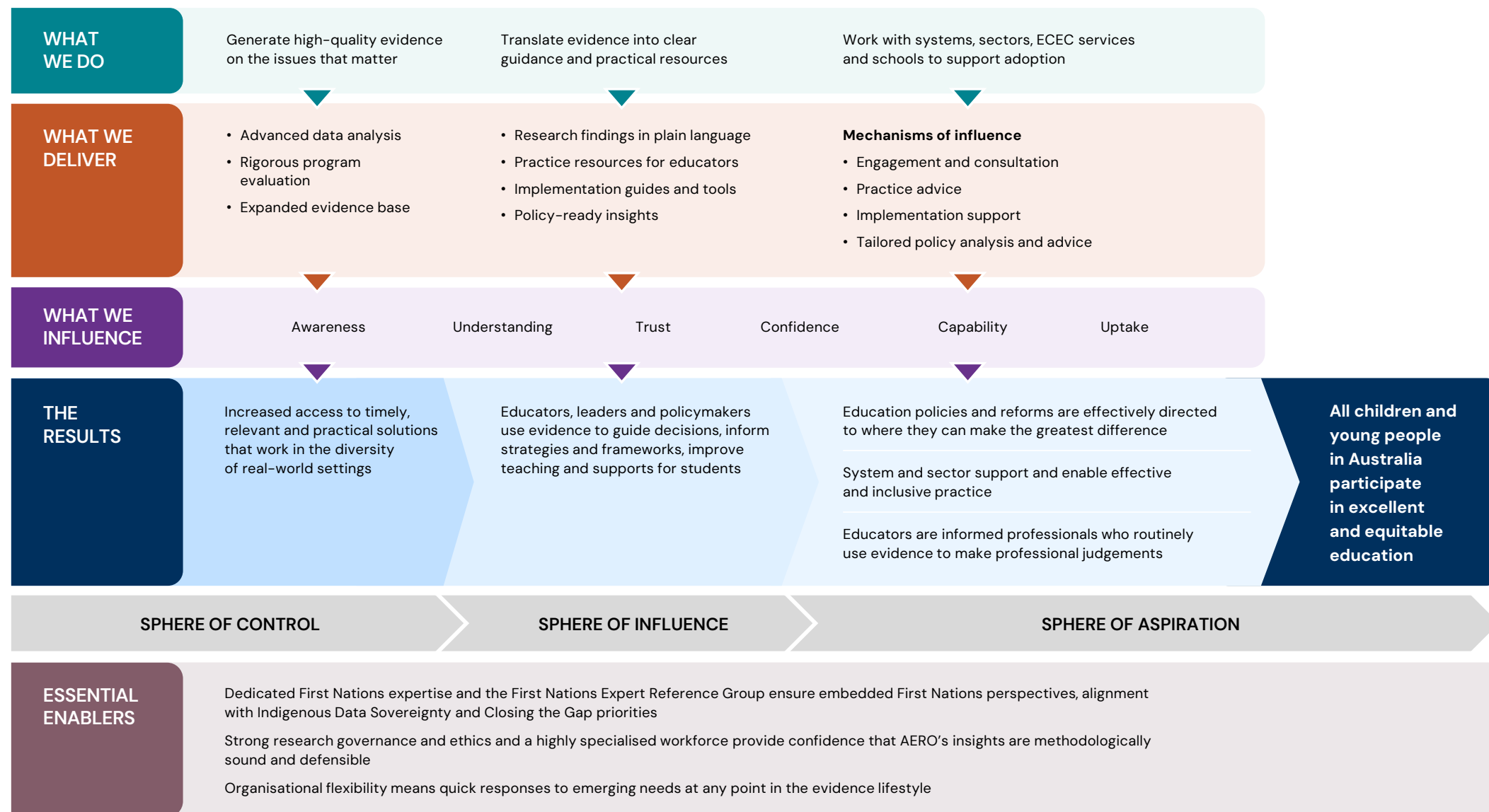
This includes a combination of:

- quantitative data on outputs and reach
- feedback from users
- qualitative examples of how evidence has been used.

Our monitoring helps us to:

- understand what's working well and how we can improve
- inform decisions about our strategy
- be transparent and accountable to our funders and partners
- maintain confidence in the quality and value of our research and resources.

Figure 1: AERO's theory of change



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AERO's work is made possible by the joint funding it receives from Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

