

The Friday Forum

Via Zoom (registration required)

3.30pm–4.30pm AEDT, Friday 31 March 2023

Prospects for a credibility revolution in Australian policymaking **A conversation with the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP**

Free online event. Registrations essential.

Register here: https://acu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0udO-vpzwjGtIA_RfrqgVuGXIKv_PNnr6

Since the 1990s, the social sciences have undergone a “credibility revolution” characterised by an emphasis on empirical methods for drawing reliable inferences about cause-and-effect relationships. The credibility revolution has emphasized the importance of rigorous testing and verification of assumptions, primarily using randomized experiments and quasi-experimental methods. Prior to this, most research relied heavily on theory and assumptions, often with limited or no testing of these assumptions against real-world data. This shift in focus allows researchers to better isolate causal effects and draw more reliable inferences about the impact of policy interventions, and the 2021 Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to three researchers for their roles in fostering this revolution. Many countries – including the United States and United Kingdom – have created government agencies that routinely use randomized trials and quasi-experimental methods for evaluating public policies. Comparable agencies do not yet exist in Australia, and there have been few policy evaluations conducted using these modern tools. This is despite more than two decades of advocacy among both academics and policymakers. This discussion will explore the barriers that hinder progress towards more reliable and trustworthy policymaking in Australia, and the role that Andrew Leigh’s proposed “evidence unit” could play in fostering a credibility revolution in Australian policymaking.

[Andrew Leigh](#) is the Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury, and Federal Member for Fenner in the ACT. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from Harvard, having graduated from the University of Sydney with first class honours in Arts and Law. Andrew is a past recipient of the Economic Society of Australia's Young Economist Award and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. He recently served as a commissioner on the [Global Commission on Evidence](#), which made policy recommendations for governments, international bodies and citizens about using evidence to address societal challenges. Andrew has published over 100 academic journal articles and authored or co-authored more than ten books. He has been a member of the Australian Labor Party since 1991.



[Kyle Peyton](#) from the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences will coordinate the conversation with Andrew, followed by an audience question time.