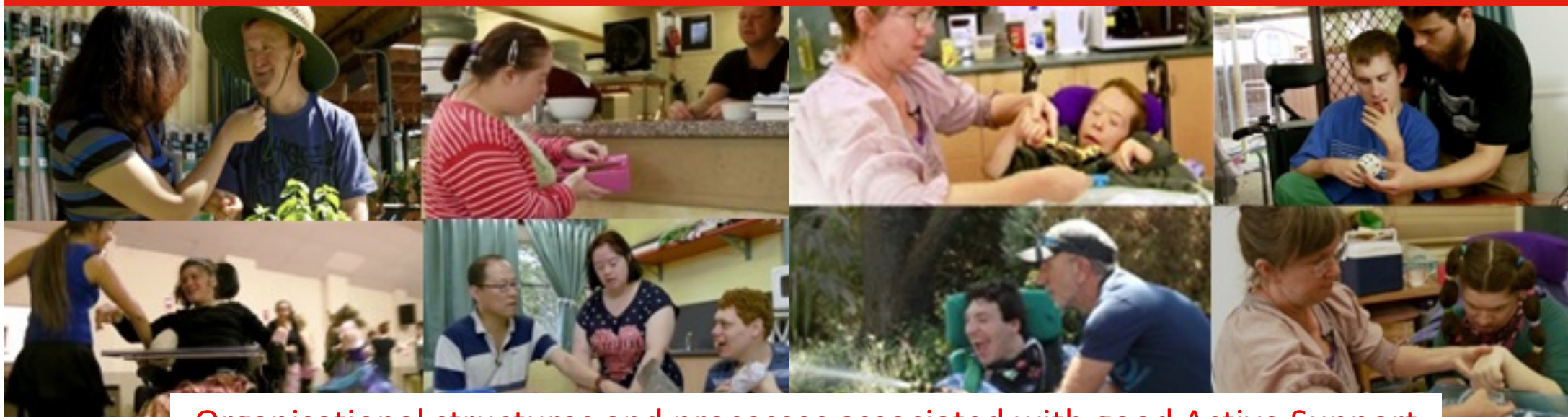




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RESEARCH CENTRE



Organisational structures and processes associated with good Active Support

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Background

- The strongest evidence for what makes a difference to quality of life in group homes is the consistent use by staff of Active Support (Bigby & Beadle-Brown, 2018)

‘an enabling relationship is utilised to facilitate the engagement of people with intellectual disabilities in meaningful activities and social relationships’ (Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2012).
- Active Support has been widely adopted by disability service delivery organisations in the UK and Australia but has been difficult to implement and sustain a consistent quality (Mansell, Beadle-Brown & Bigby, 2013)
- Recent findings have added to earlier tentative evidence about the factors that predict good quality Active Support - training, front line practice leadership, size of service, mix of service users and size of organisations (Bigby, et al., under review; Bould et al under review)
- There is little evidence about the influence of factors at the organisational level
- Albeit there are many propositions derived from organisational theory and practice wisdom particularly about organisational coherency and leadership by senior manager

Aims

- Conceptualise and identify features of senior leaders and structures for organising practice in organisations that deliver group homes services in order to categorise these for inclusion in a predictive model of the factors associated with good Active Support
- Research questions
 - What are the features of leadership and structures associated with organising practice
 - Do these features differ across organisations
 - Are there patterns indicative of a relationship between leadership and structures and the quality of Active Support.
- Draws on a sub set of data from a large large-scale study of group home services in Australia that commenced in 2009.
- Used mixed methods
- Data collected Feb 2017 – Jan 2018 (exception first interview)

Methods

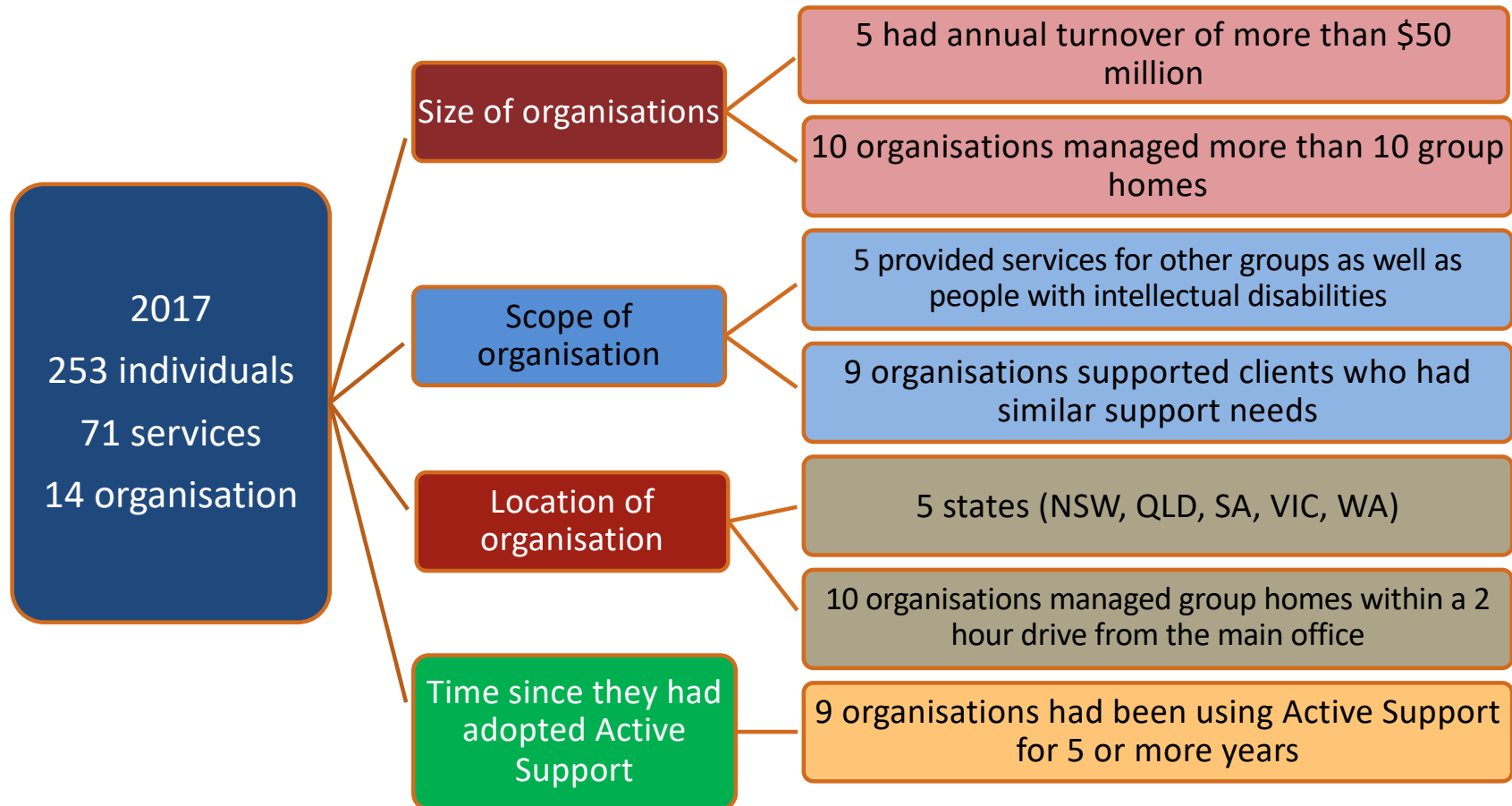
Quantitative measure of the quality of Active Support

- **Active Support Measure** (Mansell & Elliott, 1996; Mansell et al., 2005)
 - 15 items completed at the end of observation period

Qualitative data on leadership and structures at organisational level

- Interviews with nominated senior manager/s at first and last year of data collection
 - perspectives about adopting and implementing Active Support, strategies to embed it, organisation of practice leadership and challenges experienced.
 - reflections about success with Active Support, further strategies used to embed it, facilitators and barriers experienced, and changes of note in the organisation since the first interview (2-8 years previously).
- Document review
 - most recent annual report, position descriptions for support workers, training materials, and documents describing practice.

Participants and settings



Analysis

Quantitative – descriptive statistics

- Percentage of the maximum possible score on the ASM was calculated for each service user.
- Percentage of services users in each service receiving good Active Support (66.66% or more) calculated
- Percentage of services in each organisation received good Active Support was calculated

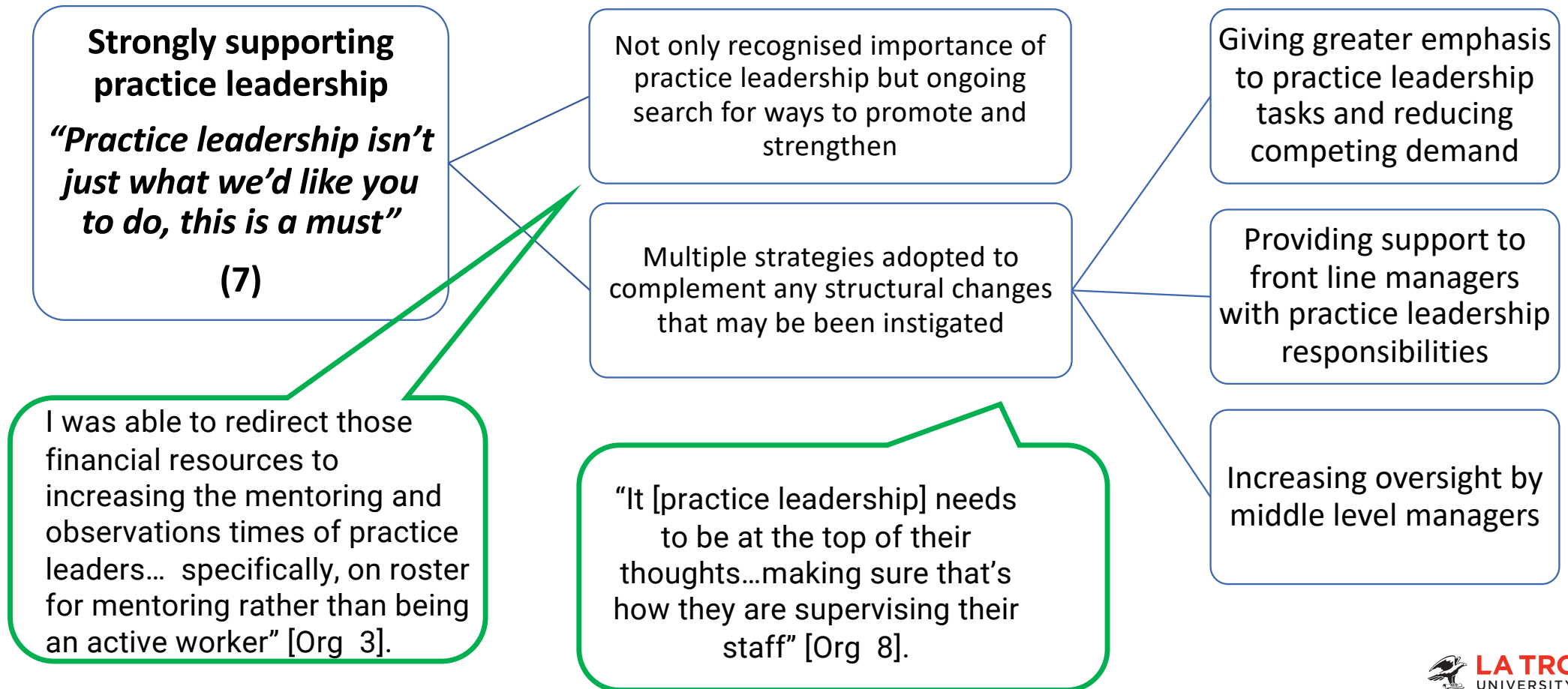
Qualitative

- Inductive interpretative analysis using grounded theory coding methods and constant comparative approach
(Charmaz, 2006)
- Content analysis of more factual textual data in interviews and documents
- First across whole data set to conceptualise categories – then disaggregated by organisation and presences or absence of categories identified each
- Identified 3 conceptual categories and 8 sub categories – interesting in themselves re perspectives of senior leaders

Findings: Focus on practice and Active Support among senior leaders



Focus on practice and Active Support among senior leaders



Focus on practice and Active Support among senior leaders

Different and competing priorities among senior leaders
'I'm flying the flag a bit solo at the moment'
(5)

Seeking to gain more consensus about importance of practice

Sense of having lost focus not all on the same page any more

Practice as on of many competing priorities - impact of staff changes and NDIS

I guess it's the momentum is one of the important factors...And [manager] is not necessarily trying to take away that focus of Active Support, not at all. I think it's just all this other stuff that's happening, which is time-consuming and stressful and that's kind of detracting from it, a bit [Org 6].

...you know we're working on active support but we've got a lot of those other fundamentals we have to get in place in order to have people with the right skills and capabilities, and people who are accountable for what they are doing and delivering what we need them to deliver [Org 10].

Focus on practice and Active Support among senior leaders

Still in the early stages of adopting Active Support

"It's just time and getting stuff in place"
(5)

Work in progress for all leaders
For some only just beginning

Still doing initial staff training

Still making initial structural, system or cultural changes

...got people talking about Active Support. Now, whether they understand it is another matter. I think the other part is being much more hands on from our practice leaders. And, yeah, we've still got inconsistencies, but that's because they haven't got to every house yet to do that more micro work, which starts to help staff take the theory into practise [Org 9].

We plan to implement it across all services, so it becomes a core part of our practice and our model...I don't think there's anything necessarily getting in the way...it's still relatively new, so we're just progressing and building the knowledge and the confidence [Org 11].

Organisation of practice leadership

Close to every day service delivery (10)

Concentration of practice leadership tasks (10)

we've had team leaders who have worked across three houses, even been four ... we definitely realise that the optimum number is two houses, which gives that team leader the opportunity in theory to be able to get out to their locations and be more present in the houses and that sort of thing [Org 8]

Coherence of documented expectations about Active Support

Active Support central to expectations of the way staff work (11)

Active Support incorporated into a practice framework (3)

Mapping categories by organisation - looking for patterns

% houses good A/S in an organisation	Senior leaders focus on practice and Active				Organisation of practice leadership		Coherence of documented expectations about Active Support	
	'practice is really, really important'	'practice leadership isn't just what we'd like you to do	'I'm flying the flag a bit solo at the moment'	'it's just time and getting stuff in place'	Close to every day service delivery	Concentrated tasks	AS in a practice framework	Central to expectation s of way staff work
100%	√	√	-	-	√	√	-	-
100%	√	√	-	-	√	√		√
71%	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	√
86%	√	√	-	-	√	√	-	√
83%	√	√	-	-	√	√	√	√
71%	√	√	-	-	√	√	-	√
57%	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√
57%	-	√	√	-	√	-	√	√
50%	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
50%	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	√
40%	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-
33%	-	-	√	√	√	√	-	-
33%	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	√
29%	√	-	-	√	√	√	-	√

Summary and Implications

- Conceptual categories and sub categories – interesting in themselves re perspectives of senior leaders, differing organisation of practice leadership and paperwork
- Data illustrates fragility of leaders prioritising practice in face of external demands and personnel change
- Pattern suggests combination of these features are associated with good Active Support
 - shared prioritisation of practice and Active Support by senior leaders
 - strong support for practice leadership by senior leaders
 - the organisation of practice leadership close to every day service delivery
 - concentration in one position with front–line management.
- Reflect some features of coherence proposed in the literature but coherence of values, priorities and actions about practice rather than documented values, policies or procedures
- Apparent insignificance of paperwork – not surprising from Quilliam’s work
- Highlight importance of organisational leaders understanding and prioritising practice
- Echoes assertions about beneficial effects of practice leadership close to front line in the practice literature

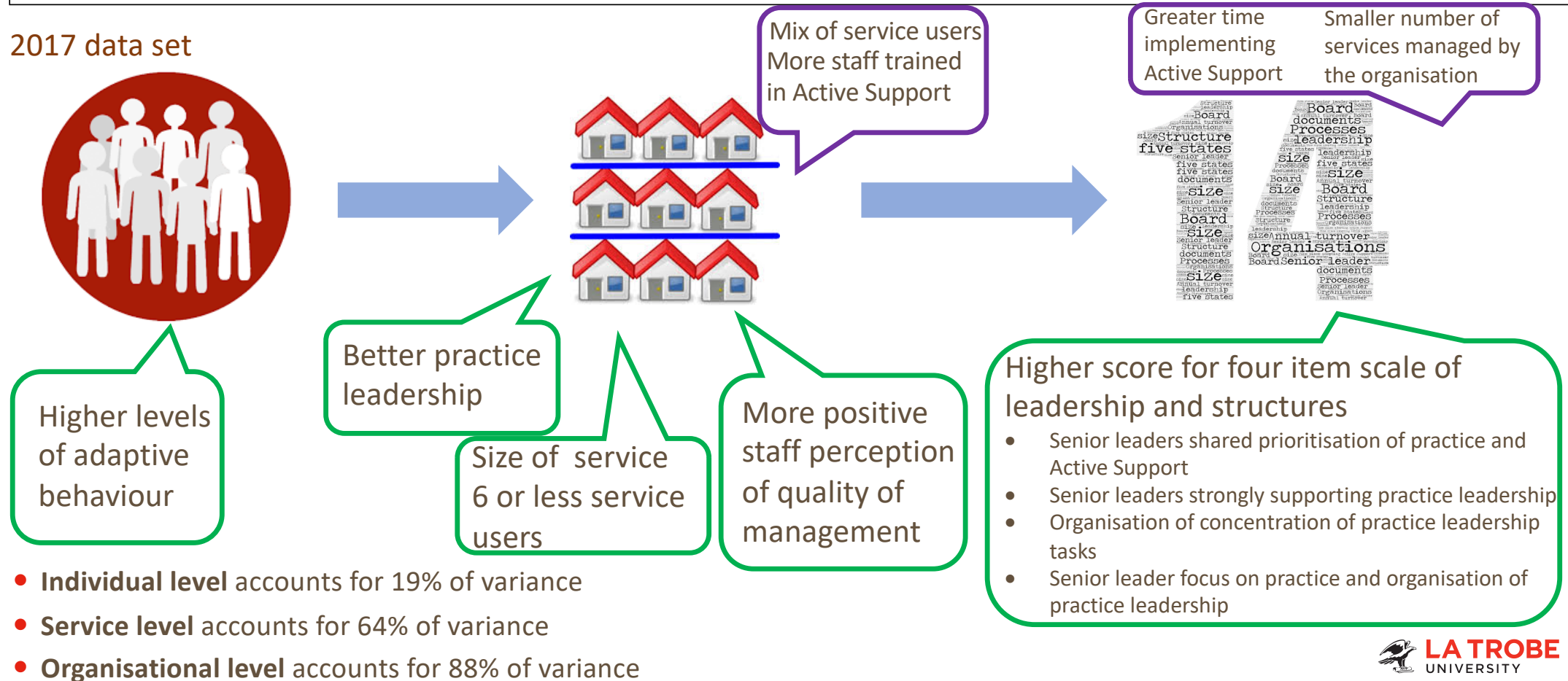
Adding to the overall picture

Transforming qualitative categories of organisational leadership and structure into a quantitative scale

Cronbach's Alpha = 0.72

Test the predictive power of these items and other variables, singly or in combination, in relation to Active Support

2017 data set



Thank You



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References