



OUR BETTER ANGELS:

**A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE
TOOLS OF BEHAVIOURAL
ECONOMICS**

**Dr Katie Attwell, Sir Walter Murdoch School of Public Policy
and International Affairs**

21 March 2017

PERSUASION VS. NUDGE

- Nudge: humans fallible, cognitive misers, sheep...
- Influences behaviour in ways precluding reason
- Persuasion with social identity: humans can (or can be encouraged to) process information deliberately.
- What works, what lasts?



ETHICAL AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS?

- Who gets to nudge?
- Whose vision of ‘the good life’?
- Trickery? (publicity principle universal?)
- Free will (markets)
- Deliberation over policy ends and means?

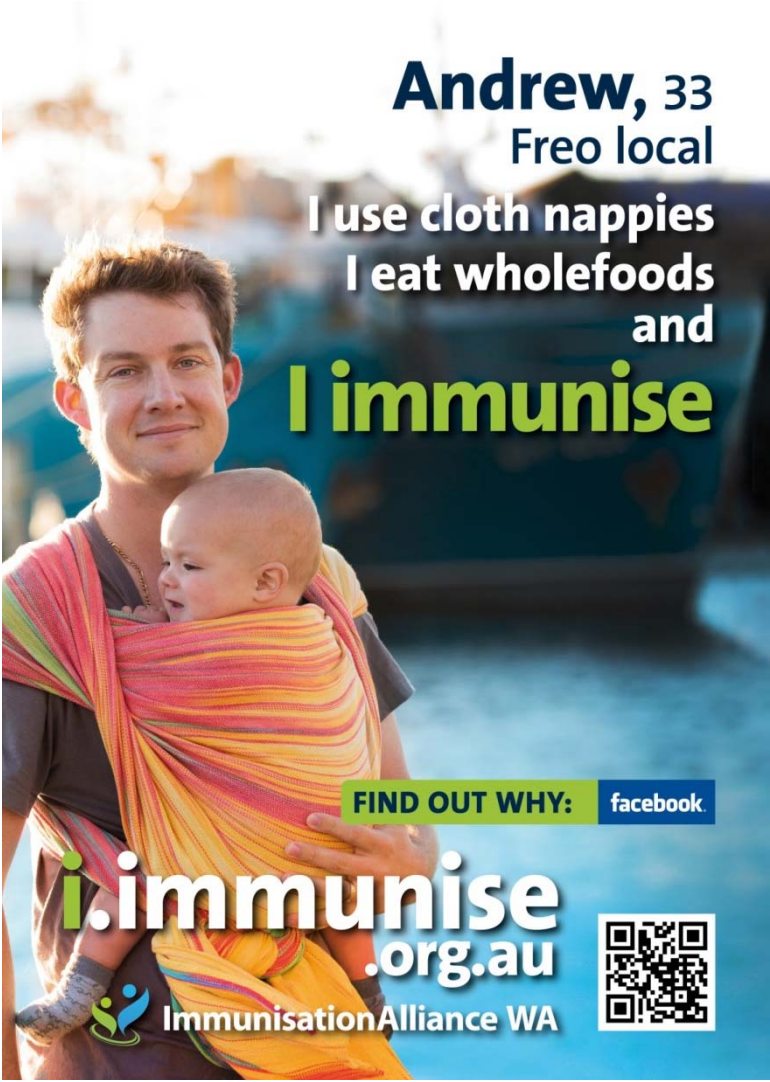


SOCIAL IDENTITIES ARE MEANINGFUL

- Peer education
- Redefine social norm: who we are and what we do.
- Norm internalisation and private acceptance.
- Lasting ...





A photograph of a man with short brown hair, smiling, carrying a baby in a colorful striped cloth nappy. They are outdoors near a body of water with a boat in the background.

Andrew, 33
Freo local

I use cloth nappies
I eat wholefoods
and
I immunise

FIND OUT WHY: [facebook](#)

i.immunise
.org.au

 ImmunisationAlliance WA



CONCLUSIONS

- Behavioural insights has a lot to offer – evidence based policy.
- Nudge is not (always) a quick fix.
- Evidence / basis for *this* nudge being justifiable?
- Social identity persuasion options available?



REFERENCES

- Mols, Frank, S. Alexander Haslam, Jolanda Jetten, and Niklas K. Steffens. 2015. "Why a nudge is not enough: A social identity critique of governance by stealth." *European Journal of Political Research* 54 (1)
- Attwell, Katie, and Melanie Freeman. 2015. "I Immunise: An evaluation of a values-based campaign to change attitudes and beliefs." *Vaccine* 33 (46) [open access]