



# Shiny New Toys



Craig Thomler  
September 2012



Apple iPad launch



Salvatore Ferragamo shoes



Bugatti Veyron, top speed 267 mph



The Transition<sup>®</sup> by Terrafugia – world's first street legal flying car

  
**TERRAFUGIA**  
*DrivenToFly.com*



Swarovski crystal encrusted iPod nanos



# LIGHTSABER

The coolest weapon ever. Search your feelings. You know that it is true.



Dyson's DC06 robot vacuum cleaner

Suidobashi KR01 Kuratas Battle Mech. Can be operated by smartphone, inc. working gattling gun



Comes in 16 colours and a \$90 cupholder in the cockpit is optional.

MY NEMESIS



SHOP BY CATEGORY

SHOP FOR GIFTS

WHAT'S NEW

OMGWTFUNI

GEEK POINTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE

[GO](#)

T-Shirts & Apparel

Geek Toys

Gadgets

Home & Office

Computer Stuff

Caffeine & Edibles

Electronics

Geek Kids

Books

Gifts under \$10

Gifts under \$20

Gifts under \$50

Clearance

**SALE**

TG Exclusives

Gift Certificates



PLUSH  
**HALFLING  
SLIPPERS**

They're not  
tricksy,  
just comfy.

**OH SO COMFY.**

**NEW STUFF FTW!**



Soft Blocks - Foam Floating  
Brick Blocks  
\$39.99



someecards Pint Glass  
\$7.99



Superhero Earrings  
\$9.99 - \$14.99



Superhero Dangle Earrings  
\$29.99



Legend of Zelda Link Plush  
\$12.99



Klingon Monopoly  
\$39.99



So *what is it*  
about shiny  
new toys?

The case of the  
*Attractive Chicken*  
and the  
*Unattractive Chicken*



# *Attractive Chicken vs Unattractive Chicken*

*Study by Marketing professor Raj Raghunathan and Ph.D. student Szu-Chi Huang of the McCombs School of Business.*

- Showed participants two chicken photos
- Told them the plump one was a *natural chicken*, and that the sickly one had been *genetically engineered*
- Half were told natural chickens were *healthy but less tasty*, and genetically engineered chickens were *tasty, but less healthy*
- The others were told the opposite

# *Attractive Chicken vs Unattractive Chicken*

*Both groups preferred the plump chicken:*

- The first group claimed they *valued health* above taste
- The second group said *taste was more important*
- Neither group justified their choice based on *how they felt about the chicken's looks*



# Research suggests that

## *humans are “hard-wired” to believe*

It requires significant cognitive resources to test an assumption, so it's more efficient to *believe* most claims than *reject* them

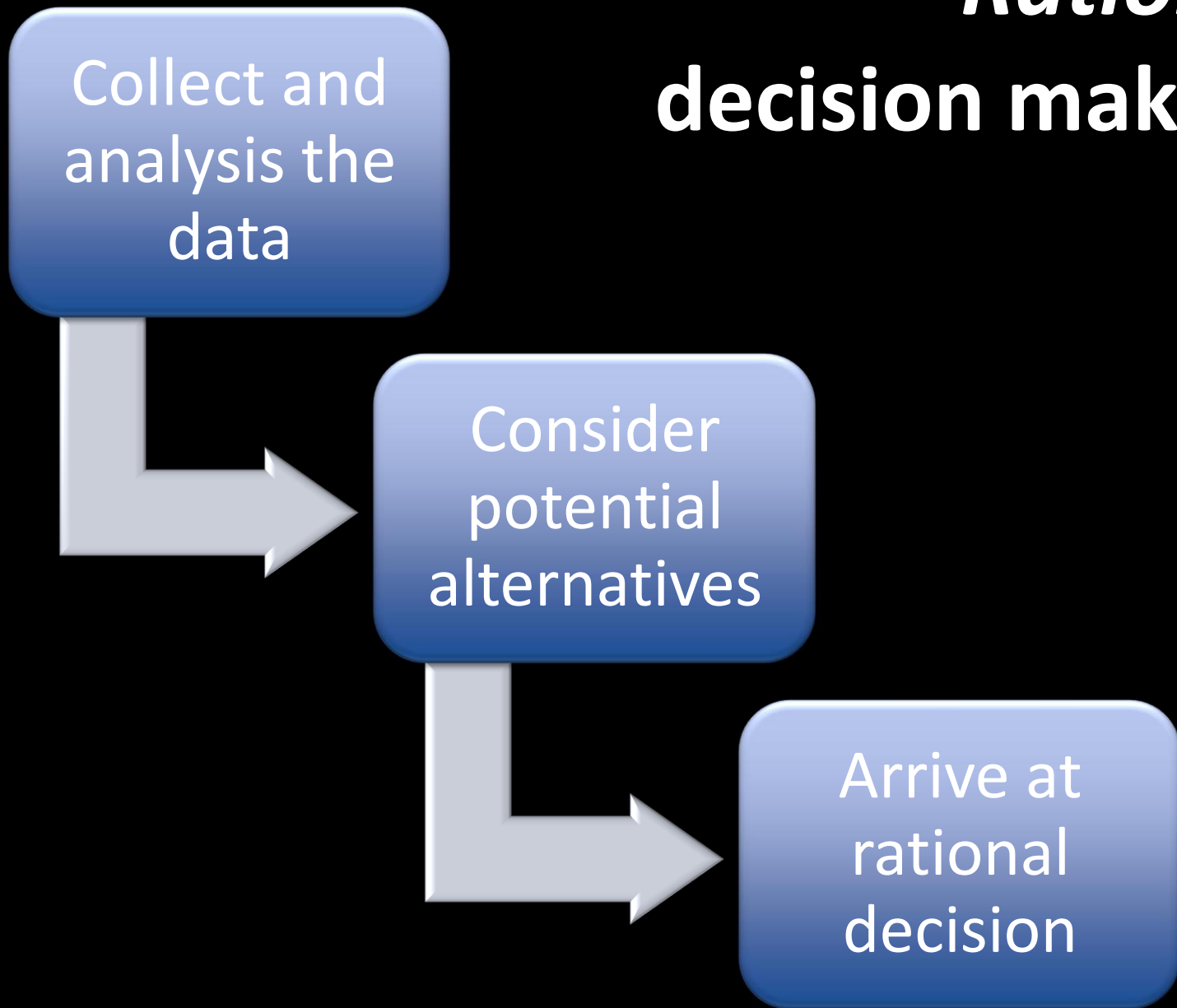
This is why *we mostly trust* big institutions, well-known brands, and figures of authority - *we don't have the resources to test every assumption*

And it's one reason *advertising works*... we can't test so many claims!

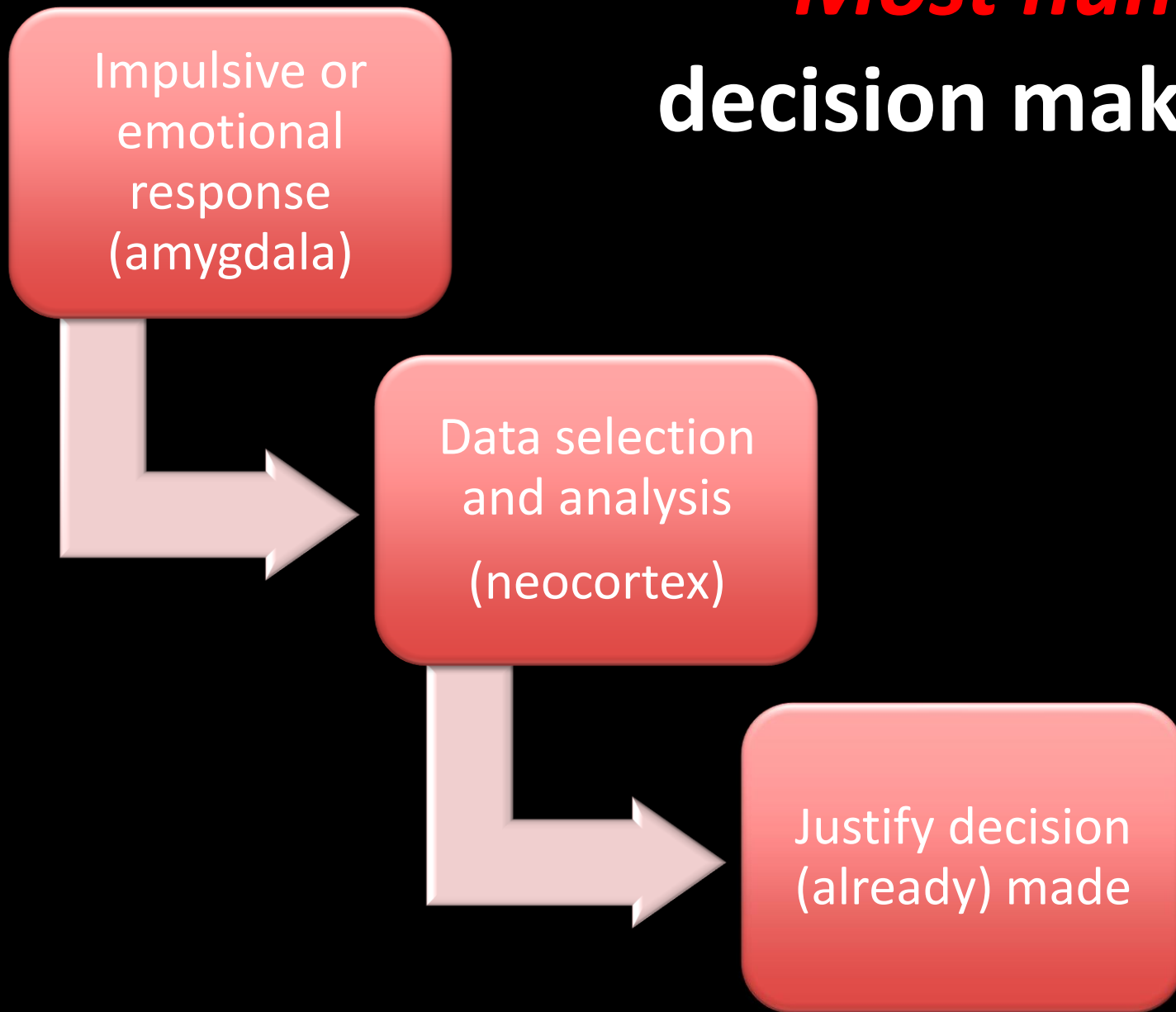
In other words:

- *acceptance* of an idea requires *low effort*,
- subsequent *rejection* of that idea requires *greater effort*

# *Rational* decision making



# *Most human* decision making



# Human decision making

More and more, psychological and neurological science is discovering that *much of our decision-making is made at an unconscious and emotional level.*

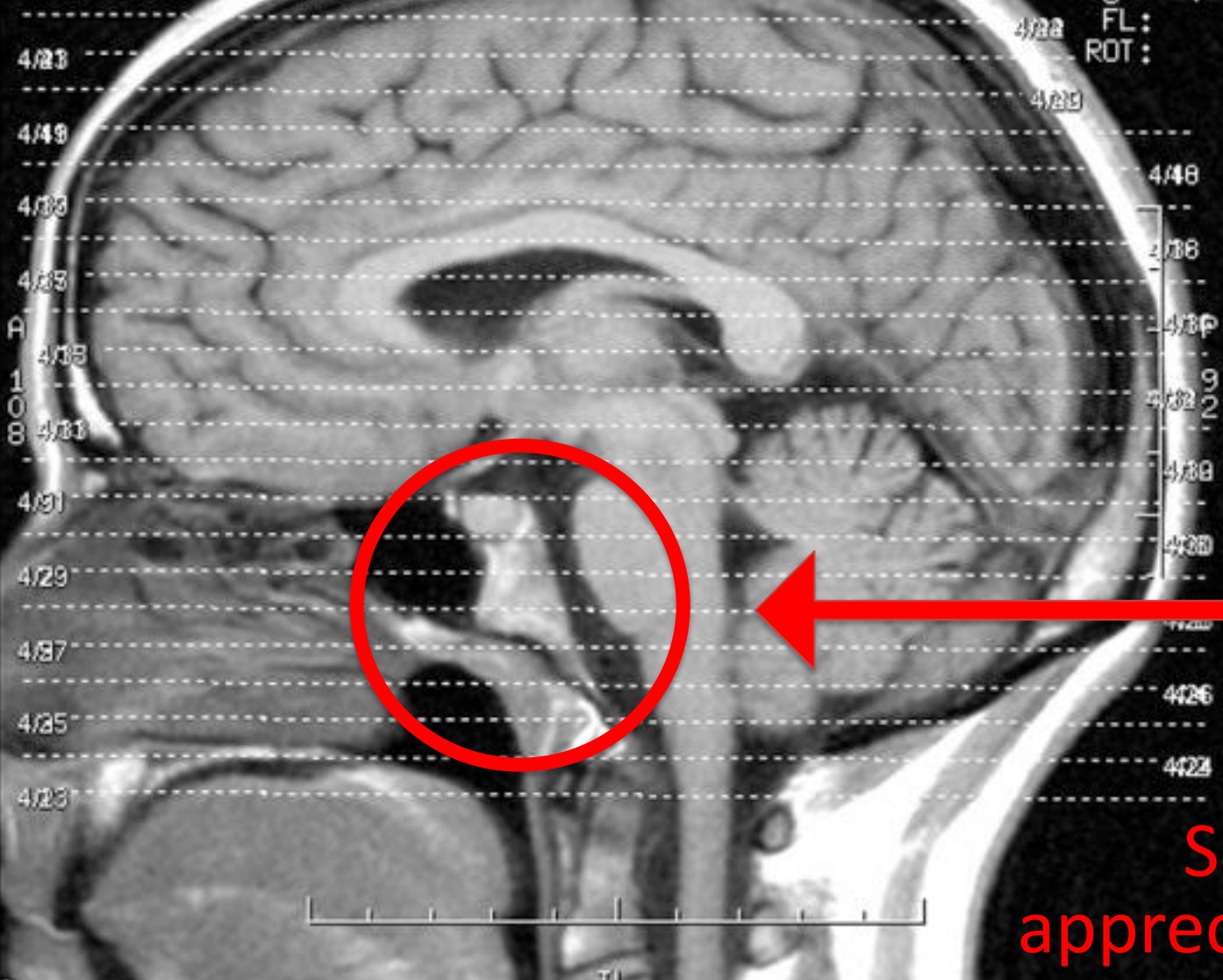
What we are now finding is that when we are thinking about mundane and simple issues, such as small calculations, the brain areas associated with rational planning (such as the pre-frontal cortex) tend to be more active.

However when thinking about difficult, exciting, interesting activities, such as investing in a new business, or buying a \$10 million lottery ticket, *the brain areas associated with emotion – such as the midbrain dopamine system – become more active.*

**Source:** Paul Harrison, ASIC Summer School

Se: 3  
Im: 11  
OSag R3.1

Mag = 1.2  
FL:  
ROT:



Shiny New Toy  
appreciation centre  
(Amygdala)

# Humans are not naturally rational decision-makers

- People make their decisions *impulsively*, then stand by their impulses as if their decisions were made rationally.
- People make their decisions based on *their own experiences*, weighting this more highly than evidence from other sources
- People tend to make decisions *on their own*, instead of connecting with numerous others for outside perspectives
- People are *unaware of how the influence* of a specific question changes how they make their decisions
- People avoid things they perceive as *risky* – and things they do not personally understand are, by default, very risky

# Humans have biases

- **Selective search for evidence** (Confirmation bias) – We gather facts supporting certain conclusions, disregarding facts that support different conclusions.
- **Premature termination of search for evidence** – We tend to accept the first alternative that looks like it might work.
- **Inertia** – We can be unwillingness to change thought patterns that we have used in the past in the face of new circumstances.
- **Selective perception** – We actively screen-out information that we do not believe is important.
- **Wishful thinking (optimism bias)** – We tend to want to see things in a positive light and this can distort our perception and thinking.
- **Choice-supportive bias** - we distort our memories of chosen and rejected options to make those chosen seem more attractive.

# Humans have biases

- **Recency** – We tend to place more attention on more recent information and either ignore or forget more distant information.
- **Repetition bias** – We have a willingness to believe what we've been told most often and by the greatest number of different sources.
- **Anchoring & adjustment** – Our decisions may be unduly influenced by initial information that shapes our view of later information.
- **Group think** – We may be pressured to conform to group opinions.
- **Source credibility bias** – We're inclined to reject information where we have a bias against the person, organization, or group, but are inclined to accept information from someone we like.
- **Incremental decision making and escalating commitment** – We silo decisions, looking at each as a small step in a process. This tends to perpetuate a series of similar, escalating decisions.

# Humans have biases

- **Attribution asymmetry** – We tend to attribute our success to our abilities and talents, but attribute our failures to bad luck or external factors. Meanwhile we tend to attribute the success of others to good luck, and their failures to their mistakes.
- **Role fulfillment (Self-fulfilling prophecy)** – We conform to the decision making expectations that others have of someone in our position and environment.
- **Underestimating uncertainty and the illusion of control** – We tend to underestimate future uncertainty because we tend to believe we have more control over events than we really do.
- **Framing bias** – we interpret information based on how, when and where it is presented to us, rather than objectively.

# But humans can make rational decisions

- **Self awareness** – Recognise, accept & compensate for your biases as necessary.
- **Self reflection** – Respect your instincts, but reflect before acting.
- **Critical thinking** – Test assumptions
- **Employ a methodology** – Use a neutral decision-making process, and don't second guess it!



# If we try really, really hard!

- Am I simply intrigued by the shininess and newness of this Toy, or is there really something there?
- What would I need to know & what questions would I need answered to figure out whether this Shiny New Toy is worth my attention?
- How long will it reasonably take me to figure out what I need to know? Can I even afford that investment? How does it impact what I'm doing now?

~~• *Should I go ahead and...*~~

~~*Hey wait! There's another Shiny New Toy!*~~



Mobile Me



MSN



MySpace



Netvibes



Newsvine



Orkut



Pandora



Picasa



Posterous



Qik



Reddit



RSS



Sharethis



Skype



Squidoo



Stumbleupon



Technorati



Tumblr



Twitter



Viddler



Vimeo



Windows



WordPress



Xing



Yahoo



Yahoo Buzz



Yelp



YouTube

# My experience in government online teams

## I need a...

- New website
- Facebook page
- Twitter account
- Forum
- Mobile app
- Machine that goes 'ping'

# My experience in government online teams

## I need a...

- New website

### Why?

- The Minister/Senior Person said they wanted a new one
- I didn't know that we had a website already
- I **BELIEVE** our existing websites;
  - are too 'govvie',
  - are hard to search,
  - are the wrong colour,
  - aren't used by anyone,
  - are hard to update,
  - are too slow,
  - are managed badly,
  - don't use social media.



# POST

## My (rational) methodology

People

Objectives

Strategy

Technology

# The outcome I seek

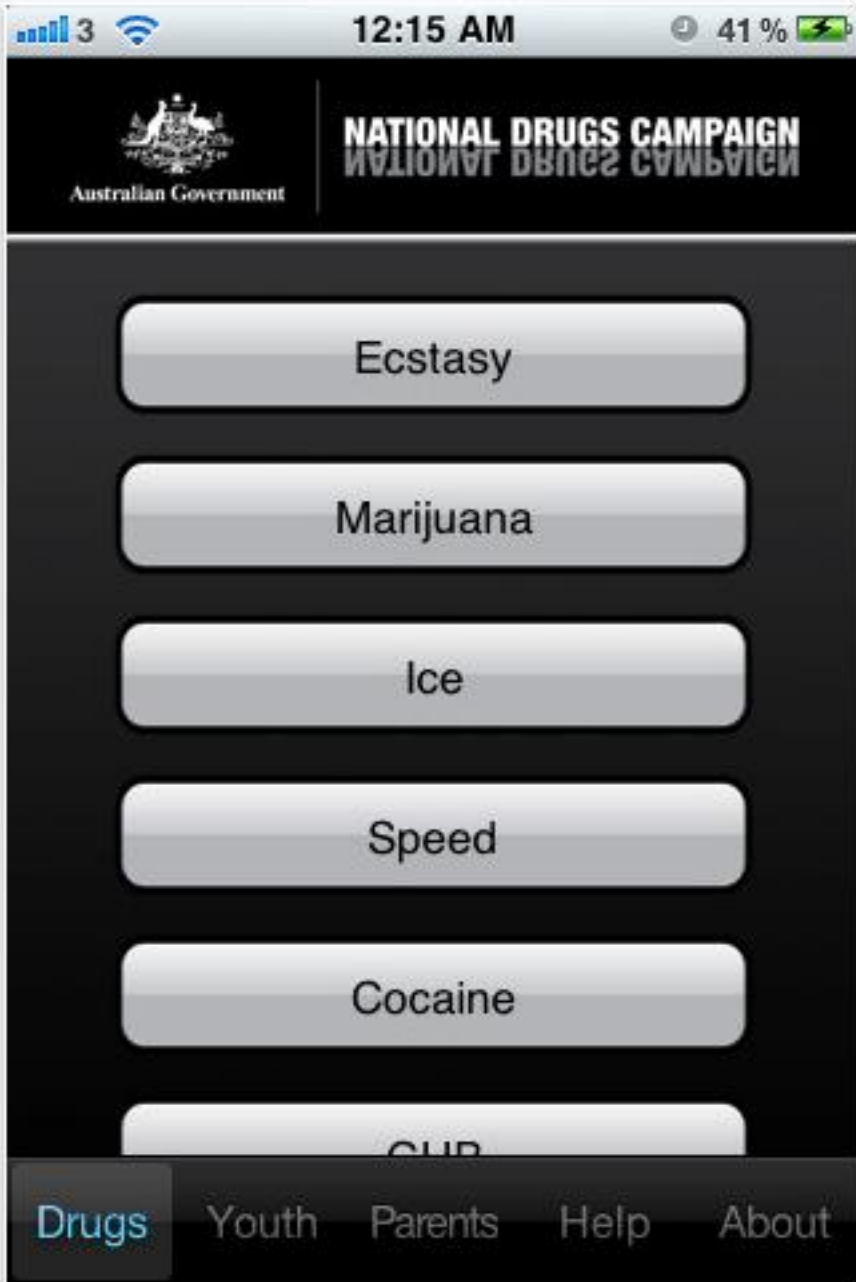
## My goal is to...

- Meet a legal requirement
- Address a Ministerial priority
- Present information on a topic
- Inform the community about their options
- Consult the community on an issue/policy
- Empower communities to do for themselves

**For example**

# **My goal is to...**

- Provide access to information on drugs to young people at the time and place at which they are making a decision on whether to take them.



**For example**

# **My goal is to...**

- Provide communities with local information to help empower them to be more involved in local decision-making



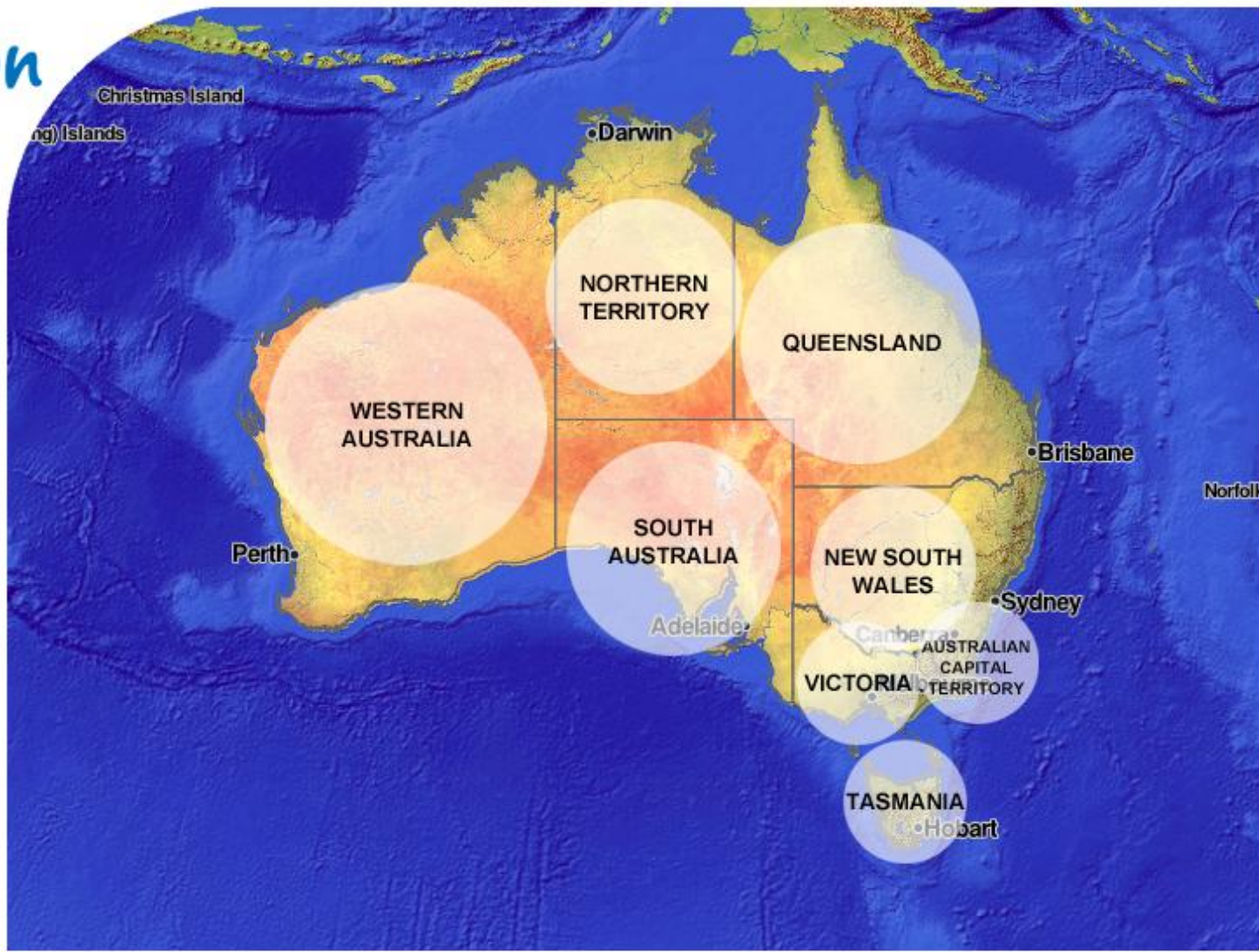
An Australian Government Initiative



# Welcome to myregion

A place to discover more about Australia's regions.

Search for a region by using the map or the menu



## Contact us



SEARCH SITE:

FIND REGION BY POSTCODE:

Find region by state ▶

Find content by type ▶

Find content by theme ▶

**For example**

# **My goal is to...**

- Have people share their weight-loss journey, seeking reinforcement from their peers.



# Swap It, Don't Stop It

16,726 likes · 118 talking about this

✓ Liked \* ▾

Government Organization  
This is the official page for the Australian Government's Swap It, Don't Stop It campaign, the next phase of the Measure Up campaign.



👍 16,726



5 ▾

About

Photos

Likes

Finding Eric

Welcome



Questions?

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<http://eGovAU.blogspot.com>

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@Delibaunz