

30 August 2019

Commissioner Romlie Mokak  
Productivity Commission  
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East  
Melbourne VIC 8003

Dear Rom,

**Re: The Lowitja Institute's submission to the Productivity Commission on the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper.**

We support the Productivity Commission's steps to develop an evaluation strategy for Australian Government policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We also support a co-designed and co-developed evaluation strategy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that ensures:

- government policies and programs achieve agreed objectives;
- government policies and programs are effective and achieve sustainable impacts, and
- there is evidence of continual improvement in government policies and programs.

Based on our review of the Productivity Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper, the Lowitja Institute recommends:

1. that the Indigenous Productivity Commissioner provides opportunity to meet with the Lowitja Institute to discuss the key points highlighted in the Institute's response, and
2. that the Productivity Commission supports the Lowitja Institute to facilitate discussions with key stakeholders from distinct groups to further discuss and make recommendations on relevant components in the Issues Paper which concerns them. We believe this will provide the commission with much needed sector relevant responses.

Warm regards

Janine Mohamed  
Chief Executive Officer

## Introduction

The Lowitja Institute (the Institute) is Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. The Institute is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples through high impact quality research, knowledge translation, and by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

The Lowitja Institute journey began long before the first CRC was established in Darwin in 1997. Its roots lay in calls by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over many decades for real change in health status and health delivery for their communities. Paramount to that was the need for a new research paradigm, amid a growing sense and concern that research into the alarming evidence of health disparity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was descriptive and too often serving the priorities of researchers and non-Indigenous people. Each of the subsequent CRCs has built on the legacy of the preceding organisation; gathering supporters, partners and a wider network of researchers committed to its mission, values and methodologies. This has been underpinned by the philosophy that effective health research requires a process that reflects community priorities and earns trust and community engagement.

The information provided in this submission is based on the Lowitja Institute's multiple roles in:

- Commissioning research projects that have:
  - focused on evaluation as the research topic;
  - used evaluation approaches and methods; and
  - provided recommendations to improve evaluation approaches (*An Evaluation Framework to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health; Accountability for public value in the Aboriginal community sector; The Overburden Report: Contracting for Indigenous Health Services*).
- Leading projects to evaluate several programs (*National Appraisal of Continuous Quality Improvement Initiatives in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care; Improving the Patient Journey for Indigenous Patients from Remote Areas; Pathway Evaluation of the National Health and Medical Research Council Documents on Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*), and
- Facilitating national discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous stakeholders that have discussed evaluation and/or made recommendations that relate to evaluation.

## Submission Summary

Based on our review of the Productivity Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper, the Lowitja Institute highlights the following key points:

1. An Australian Government Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is an opportunity to develop a systems-based perspective that considers how multiple factors interact to impact on outcomes for communities. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Productivity Commissioner is well positioned to lead an Australian Government such approach to Indigenous policy and program evaluation.
2. Developing a Principles Framework within the Strategy that reflects the collective rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is important to creating shared understanding among stakeholders and balancing government priorities with community aspirations.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are commissioners and doers of evaluation and have an important role to play in evaluating outcomes in their communities. There is a need to clearly define, and promote, understanding of Indigenous leadership and co-production (or co-design and co-creation) to distinguish it from practices of ongoing consultation within evaluation processes. There is also a need to grow the skills, knowledge and infrastructure required to support these approaches.
4. There are wide-ranging benefits from successfully implemented evaluations, including: improved program logic and process, stakeholder relationships, increased knowledge, and better outcomes. However, this requires adequate resourcing towards planning and implementation, dissemination of knowledge, and measuring impact.
5. Establishing quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance and advisory mechanisms, to support the process of development and delivery of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, will be critical to success.

## Response

The Lowitja Institute's detailed response to the Productivity Commission's Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper (Issues Paper) has been organised into the following sub-sections:

- Part A: Strategy Approach, Principles and Objectives
- Part B: Stakeholders and Stakeholder Relationships
- Part C: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Participation
- Part D: Sustainable and Ethical Practice, and
- Part E: Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy.

Appendix 1 outlines what questions are addressed by each sub-section.

### ***Part A: Strategy Approach, Principles and Objectives***

#### Strategy Approach

The Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Productivity Commissioner is best positioned to lead independent decision making on priorities, with input and guidance from departments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan recognises the existence of systemic racism and its relationship to health outcomes. An Australian Government Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is well positioned to consider how to best evaluate for system discrepancies, or inequities, that may impact program quality or outcomes for Indigenous organisations and communities.
- Establishing an Indigenous governance or reference body to advise on community engagement is one way to maximise involvement. A mix of representation from government, community sector and technical experts could ensure thorough stakeholder mapping and engagement — and advise on appropriate level and mechanisms for consultation.
- Ensure, in consultation with the Coalition of the Peaks, that the principles and outcomes from the COAG Closing the Gap Reforms are incorporated into the Commission's approach.
- Build on lessons learnt from previous program implementation and evaluations, such as the recent ANAO evaluation of the *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* (2017), which demonstrates poor planning and resources for implementation of evaluations in Australian Government Indigenous programs;
- Enhancing current thinking and understanding about the mechanics of funding and program implementation across tiers of government (Australian Government and states and territories) is important to evaluating outcomes in areas such as health. For example, it would be beneficial to identify levers to promote the uptake and adoption of the Strategy with key stakeholders including jurisdictional governments and service providers.
- The Strategy should be applicable to:

- Indigenous specific and mainstream programs at the Australian Government level — as highlighted in the Issues Paper, the majority of expenditure occurs in mainstream programs and as such, these programs must be considered as a major contributor to outcomes;
- translatable to state and territory government programs to support evaluation of shared responsibilities;
- multiple programs and systems.

### Strategy Principles and Objectives

The Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- The Strategy Principles should be relevant and translatable to all stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, service providers and government policy directives.
- There should be a clear alignment of Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Principles with the rights set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration). (Note: The alignment of these principles ensures that the Strategy Principles consider both Government policy direction and progress towards the collective rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).
- The Strategy Principles should reflect a mix of guiding concepts to ensure ethical and high-quality evaluation in the unique context of program delivery and design for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The Strategy Principles include the following:
  - Principles from the Lowitja Institute Evaluation Framework to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (Kelaher, M. et. al. 2018). While this was a health-specific project, we propose that many of the framework's principles could be adapted and applied more broadly. We also propose that the method for developing the principles — which involves a review of high-level government documentation directing Indigenous policy and programs — applies to the work of the Commission.
  - The logical components as highlighted in the Issues Paper: a principles-based framework, evaluation priorities and processes.
  - Core requirements that underpin effective public policy and program planning and design processes, including consistent and informed approaches to developing program logic.
  - Shared and agreed understanding of what to evaluate, both in analysing program design and delivery, and prioritising programs and areas for evaluation.
  - A partnership approach that reflects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision making and governance.

- Buy-in from all stakeholders to ensure balanced expectations — balancing Australian Government policy directives and the collective rights as set out in the UN Declaration can help establish a medium.

### ***Part B: Stakeholders and Stakeholder Relationships***

The Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- Recognition of the issues associated with disconnect between the evaluations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and reform and improved policies and programs.
- Importance of buy-in from relevant stakeholders (Indigenous and government).
- Avoidance of an overly burdensome culture of financial and administrative accountability for Indigenous service providers.
- The Australian Government acts under robust financial accountability and ethical conduct frameworks that govern its procurement and conduct. However, the engagement of independent evaluators in these frameworks and systems may not always support cultural competence. Cultural competence, whereby there is established knowledge of, and relationships with, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities involved are key to beneficial stakeholder relationships.
- Application of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific ethical research guidelines (AIATSIS, NHMRC) may encourage a more appropriate approach including co-design or Indigenous led evaluations.
- Focus on tender or procurement of external providers may mean that the skills, relationships and knowledge gained through evaluation are commonly secured by private providers rather than the communities or service providers.
- Investing in community-controlled organisations capacity to develop and house their own evaluation processes has the potential to look at models of evaluation that:
  - inform localised decision making
  - encourage localised (or community led) policy and program cycles
  - increase social capital
  - facilitate community driven Knowledge Translation and Data Sovereignty.
- At a minimum, there should be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oversight of evaluation design and priorities that engages both organisations/ peaks, community representatives and technical experts.

### ***Part C: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Participation,***

The Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts be considered in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- Ensuring that ‘Indigenous-specific’ approaches that reflect the co-production (encompassing co-design and co-creation) involve collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout the process, and create iterative relationships between stakeholders, while maintaining overall progression from project development to ultimate impact.
- Establishing mechanisms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholder involvement in the governance of the Strategy, including the development, is critical and should be done as a priority. For example, resourcing a non-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lead agency to coordinate and facilitate evaluation activities with government departments to:
  - support and develop evaluation and quality improvement literacy;
  - ensure a consistent approach to evaluation across departments;
  - monitor and evaluate practice; and
  - translate evaluation outcomes more broadly into policy and practice.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as commissioners and doers of evaluation and have an important role to play in evaluating outcomes in their communities.
- Indigenous organisations, such as the Lowitja Institute, often have limited resources — not just in skills but also time and infrastructure — to monitor and track the outcomes of our programs and projects. Structural capacity, or limitations, such as the short-term nature of funding agreements must also be considered. Funding programs and processes need to support capacity to monitor and evaluate.
- The Indigenous Evaluation Strategy should draw on learnings from the following:
  - A recent report conducted by the Lowitja Institute found that while there is an overabundance of research evidence generated by Australian universities and research organisations, there is a need to shift the focus of investment from funding traditional health research to focus on research that can be applied in healthcare/ health service delivery settings. Such a shift would require increased participation of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and potentially development of research and evaluation related skills (Jameel, A. 2019)
  - The Lowitja Institute Evaluation Framework found that expanded participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would require access to training. (Jameel,A. 2019)
  - *“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ exclusion from participation in the health knowledge economy and the impact that this has had in devaluing Indigenous knowledge and world views. On a national level, capacity building strategies to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce is required.”* (Ewen S, et. al. 2019)
  - Models such as the Indian Health Service Tribal Epidemiology Centres (United States) and Whanau Ora (New Zealand) that decentralise evaluation to more localised models should be further considered by the Productivity Commission for application to the Australian context (page 23 of the Issues Paper).

## ***Part D: Sustainable and Ethical Practice***

### Evaluation Approaches (pre-project, ongoing, and post project)

In addition to the information provided in the Issues Paper, the Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- The development and implementation of the Strategy should be approached from a systems-based perspective that considers 'the interrelationships between parts (such as stakeholders, quality management approaches (e.g. accreditation, CQI and so on), human resources, information systems, funding, time, values and beliefs, and so on) and their relationships to a functioning whole, often understood within the context of an even greater whole' (Trochim et al. 2006). In addition, adequate resourcing of the 'parts' is necessary to achieve this overarching vision.
- A conceptual framework for evaluation literacy should be developed to ensure all stakeholders can identify appropriate and effective evaluation approaches, critically appraise and optimise evaluation pathways, and reflect on the capacity and capability needed to tailor approaches across contexts. Based on Bayley and Phipps (2017) research impact model, the evaluation model should support the identification of: the **how** (the practices and processes that underpin evaluation and create improvement), the **what** (the identification, assessment, evidencing and articulation of evaluation and improvement endpoints), and the **who** (the successful integration of these by stakeholders).
- Evaluation and other quality management requirements are reflected in all government funded contracts and deliverables.
- The Strategy should clearly define 'Indigenous-specific' approaches and implement a knowledge translation strategy to ensure all evaluation stakeholders fully comprehend the term in order to minimise the risk that co-design and co-creation becomes a euphemism for consulting (through yarning, storytelling, and listening (page 15 of the Issues paper) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at different stages of an evaluation. As described by Phipps et al (2016), co-production (encompassing co-design and co-creation) involves collaboration throughout the process and creates an iterative relationship between stakeholders, while maintaining an overall progression from project development to ultimate impact.
- Recognition that several tried and tested evaluation approaches and the associated theoretical frameworks that informed these approaches are predominantly based on Western knowledge and ways of doing.
- Given limited formal reporting of what has and hasn't worked in terms of approaches, the allocation of time and resources to identify and record the lessons learnt from various evaluations approaches would be of significant value. For example, small focus groups with different stakeholders or interviews with key informants from a range of audiences (e.g.



planners, evaluation brokers, data managers, analysts and so on), although costly and time consuming.

- The paper's definition and purpose of evaluations be reviewed. On p.14 "what works'... and examine the efficacy of policy implementation and identify how this may be improved'; in addition evaluations form part of the system of quality management and continuous improvement (that may have an inward-looking focus on the program's content and implementation or an outward focus that assesses the difference the program makes to its intended audience) by:
  - finding new ways to understand the issues, by engaging with your stakeholders;
  - finding the best ways to add to a program's strengths (also known as 'adaptive management') and correct its weaknesses ('risk management'); and
  - being accountable to the program's funding body, the host agency for the program, and to stakeholders.
- The Strategy should include the development of an accessible evidence-based platform for stakeholders
  - key learnings
  - historic documentation
  - de-identified databases
  - reports, and so on.
- The Strategy should recognise that different approaches may be used depending on the context, audience, project, and so on. However, should make it a requirement that evaluation and other forms of quality improvement are an integral part of government operations.

#### Process and Steps (planning, implementation, completion, and reporting)

In addition to the information provided in the Issues paper, the Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered by the Productivity Commission in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- The focus of the Strategy should be clarified as this has implications on the identification of key stakeholders, stewardship, resourcing and so on:
  - inward looking focus on the program's content and implementation;
  - outward focus that assesses the difference the program makes to its intended audience; or
  - both.
- As highlighted on page 16 of the Issues Paper, there are wide-reaching benefits from successfully implemented evaluations. However, much of this benefit requires adequate resourcing to engage with stakeholders, to effectively plan and implement the evaluation, to disseminate the results, to support the uptake of learnings and new evidence into the system, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this and measure impact;

- The Productivity Commission should clarify the stewardship and governance of the Strategy and associated quality management and improvement activities within government departments.
- The Strategy should include the establishment and resourcing of one non-government agency to coordinate and facilitate evaluation activities with government departments to:
  - support and develop evaluation and quality improvement literacy;
  - ensure a consistent approach to evaluation across departments;
  - monitor and evaluate practice; and
  - translate evaluation outcomes more broadly into policy and practice.
- Consistent advice and requirements provided by government departments about evaluations and ethical requirements should align to endorsed national guidelines. Kelaher et al (2018), following a review of government tenders, suggests there is *“no consistency regarding ethics requirements for evaluations involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Nor is there an ethic to give Aboriginal communities a voice in the evaluation through meaningful engagement or control of the evaluation.”*
- Development of an accessible evidence-based platform for stakeholders is necessary to contain and disseminate
  - key learnings,
  - historic documentation,
  - de-identified databases,
  - reports, and so on.
- The Strategy’s principles and requirements should reflect data sovereignty.
- The Strategy should ensure that knowledge translation is incorporated into evaluation approaches and methods and is adequately resourced; and
- A knowledge translation plan should be developed for the Strategy.

### ***Part E: Strategy Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation***

In addition to the information provided in the Issues paper, the Lowitja Institute submits that the following recommendations and concepts should be considered by the Productivity Commission in the development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy:

- Ensure adequate resourcing is provided to implement the Evaluation Strategy.
- Develop a governance mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.
- Incorporate a monitoring and evaluation mechanism within the Evaluation Strategy processes.
- Develop a conceptual framework for evaluation literacy to ensure all stakeholders can identify appropriate and effective evaluation approaches, critically appraise and optimise evaluation pathways and reflect on the capacity and capability needed to tailor approaches across contexts. Based on Bayley and Phipps (2017) research impact model, the evaluation model could support identifying: the **how** (the practices and processes that underpin evaluation and create

improvement), the **what** (the identification, assessment, evidencing and articulation of evaluation and improvement endpoints), and the **who** (the successful integration of these by stakeholders).

## Conclusion

***Q) Do you agree with the main components of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy suggested by the Commission? Should other components be included? If so, why?***

(Section: Components of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy)

- Consideration should be given to an additional (or fourth) component of the Strategy to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluation practice, and the skills, knowledge and infrastructure required for community driven and housed evaluations.

***Q) What approaches and models could be implemented to ensure that Australian Government agencies comply with the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy?***

(Section: Evaluation monitoring and compliance mechanisms)

- The Strategy should include the establishment and resourcing of one non-government agency to coordinate and facilitate evaluation activities with government departments to:
  - support and develop evaluation and quality improvement literacy;
  - ensure a consistent approach to evaluation across departments;
  - monitor and evaluate practice; and
  - translate evaluation outcomes more broadly into policy and practice.

***Q: How and who should we engage to maximise community and expert input to this project?***

(Section: Engagement suggestions)

- The Lowitja Institute maintains networks relevant to the Productivity Commission's considerations and would be willing to assist facilitate discussion on relevant components of the Issues Paper.

----- ends -----

## References

Australian National Audit Office (2017), *Performance Audit Report: Indigenous Advancement Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia

Bayley, J. & Phipps, D. 2017, *Building the Concept of Research Impact Literacy. Evidence and Policy*, (in press). <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426417X15034894876108>

Ewen, S., Ryan, T. & Platania-Phung, C. 2019, *Further Strengthening Research Capabilities: A review and analysis of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Researcher Workforce*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

Kelaher, M., Luke, J., Ferdinand, A., Chamravi, D., Ewen, S., & Paradies, Y. 2018, *An Evaluation Framework to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

Jameel, A. 2019 (unpublished), *The Lowitja Institute: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Health Project: A Final Report*.

Phipps, D. J., Cummings, J., Pepler, D., Craig, W. & Cardinal, S. 2016, 'The Co-Produced Pathway to Impact describes Knowledge Mobilization Processes', *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, vol. 9(1), pp. 31–40.

Productivity Commission 2019, *Issues Paper: Indigenous Evaluation Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia.

## Appendix 1: Mapping of sub-sections to Issues Paper questions

Sub-section	Issues Paper Questions
<p><b>Part A: Strategy Approach, Principles and Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we learn from evaluation systems and practice at the state and territory level? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> <li>• What lessons from these and other major Australian Government programs impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would be useful in developing an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy? (Section: Government programs)</li> <li>• What lessons can we learn from evaluation arrangements in overseas jurisdictions? (Section: Evaluation overseas)</li> <li>• Do you agree with the main components of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy suggested by the Commission? Should other components be included? If so, why? (Section: Components of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy)</li> <li>• How should an Indigenous evaluation framework differ from a general evaluation framework for government policies and programs? (Section: Relevant principles)</li> <li>• What is the best way to address mainstream programs in the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy? (Section: Applying the strategy to mainstream programs)</li> <li>• How and who should we engage to maximise community and expert input to this project? (Section: Engagement Suggestions)</li> <li>• (Consistency with UNDRIP) How could practices be improved in this respect? (Section: Objectives)</li> <li>• What principles should be included in an Indigenous evaluation framework to be used by Australian Government agencies? (Section: Relevant principles)</li> <li>• What principles should guide Australian Government agencies' evaluation efforts?</li> <li>• What principles should be used to determine evaluation priorities? (Section: Determining Evaluation Priorities)</li> <li>• What objectives should a strategy for evaluating policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek to achieve? (Section: Objectives)</li> <li>• What should be the priority policy areas for future Australian Government evaluation efforts?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part B: Stakeholders and Stakeholder Relationships,</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the advantages and disadvantages of existing Australian Government contracting and procurement arrangements for managing relationships between agencies and external evaluators and ensuring high quality and objective evaluation? (Section: Independence of evaluations and evaluators)</li> <li>• What degree of independence between evaluators and policy makers/program delivery areas is necessary and/or desirable? (Section: Independence of evaluations and evaluators)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part C: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Participation,</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we better enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to lead evaluation and strengthen their evaluation capability? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> <li>• Overseas practice</li> <li>• In what ways are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations contributing to policy and program evaluation? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> <li>• What are the barriers to further increasing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during Australian Government evaluation projects? (Section: Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into evaluation)</li> <li>• How can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, priorities and values be better integrated into policy and program evaluation?</li> </ul>

Sub-section	Issues Paper Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively do government agencies work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations when evaluating policies and programs? What can agencies do better? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> </ul>
Part D: Sustainable and Ethical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the strengths and weaknesses of current evaluation systems and practices across Australian Government agencies? Can you provide examples of good and bad practice? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> <li>• What factors (for example, circumstances or program characteristics) should be considered when choosing the most appropriate evaluation approach or method, and why? (Section: Evaluation approaches and methods)</li> <li>• In what circumstances is evaluation of policies and programs unlikely to be feasible or cost effective? (Section: Challenges of evaluation)</li> <li>• How can the challenges and complexities associated with undertaking evaluation be overcome — both generally, and in Indigenous policy specifically? (Section: Challenges of evaluation)</li> <li>• What types of evaluation approaches and methods are currently used to evaluate Indigenous programs? How could evaluation methods be improved to ensure robust and reliable evidence is produced? (Section: Evaluation Methods and Data)</li> <li>• To what extent do Australian Government agencies currently undertake policy and program evaluation? How does this vary across agencies? Approximately what proportion of evaluations are made public? (Section: Evaluation practice in Australia)</li> <li>• To what extent are the evaluation practices of Australian Government agencies consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?</li> <li>• Are there any particularly beneficial international models for the evaluation of policies and programs affecting indigenous people? What makes them effective? (Section: Evaluation overseas)</li> <li>• Which evaluation approaches and methods are particularly suited to policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Section: Evaluation approaches and methods)</li> <li>• Which evaluation approaches are best suited to encouraging self-determination and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges? Why are they suitable?</li> <li>• To what extent is evaluation planned for during the design and development of policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Section: Planning for Evaluation Early in the Policy cycle)</li> <li>• How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, perspectives and priorities currently incorporated into the design and conduct of Australian Government evaluations of Indigenous specific and mainstream policies and programs? How could this be improved? (Section: Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into evaluation)</li> <li>• What approaches and models could be implemented to ensure that Australian Government agencies comply with the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy? (Section: Evaluation monitoring and compliance mechanisms)</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>This section addresses the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key actions and decisions agencies should take when planning early for evaluation? (Section: Planning for Evaluation Early in the Policy cycle)</li> <li>• How do Australian Government agencies currently deal with ethical issues associated with evaluation? (Section: Ethical Evaluation)</li> </ul>

Sub-section	Issues Paper Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do existing ethical guidelines for evaluation and research provide sufficient guidance for evaluation commissioners, evaluators and participants in evaluations of programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? To what extent should the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy build in these guidelines? (Section: Ethical Evaluation)</li> <li>• In what circumstances should evaluation projects be subject to formal ethics review? In what circumstances should evaluation projects be exempt from formal ethics review?</li> <li>• What are the time and cost implications of embedding an ethics review process into Australian Government evaluations? (Section: Ethical Evaluation)</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p><i>This section addresses the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are current data governance arrangements effective? (Section: Data for evaluation)</li> <li>• What can be done to improve arrangements? (Section: Data for evaluation)</li> <li>• To what extent does a lack of high quality, accessible data, including data gaps, act as a barrier to undertaking effective evaluation of policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? (Section: Evaluation Methods and Data)</li> <li>• How can evaluation results be better used in policy and program design and implementation?</li> </ul> <p><b>Completion</b></p> <p><i>This section addresses the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways can Indigenous and Western evaluation approaches be successfully combined? (Section: Evaluation approaches and methods)</li> <li>• What are the benefits, costs and challenges associated with implementing randomised control trials? What are the most satisfactory alternatives, and why? (Section: Evaluation approaches and methods)</li> </ul> <p><b>Reporting</b></p> <p><i>This section addresses the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the current arrangements and requirements (if any) for publishing Australian Government evaluation reports? How are agencies held accountable for responding to evaluation recommendations or findings? (Sections: Evaluation Transparency)</li> <li>• Should all evaluation reports be published? In what circumstances might it be appropriate to not publish evaluation reports? (Sections: Evaluation Transparency)</li> <li>• What mechanisms currently exist for sharing evaluation results and data with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluation participants? Are these effective? How could they be improved? (Sections: Evaluation Transparency)</li> <li>• What can be done to ensure that knowledge generated through evaluation is identified and translated in such a way that it can be used to usefully and meaningfully inform policy design and implementation? (Section: Identifying and translating knowledge from evaluation)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part E: Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy</b></p>	<p><i>This section addresses the following questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What supporting features and arrangements are important for the successful implementation and operation of a principles based Indigenous evaluation framework and accompanying list of evaluation priorities? (Section: Key enabling mechanisms for effective evaluation)</li> </ul>

Sub-section	Issues Paper Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What supporting features and arrangements are important for the successful implementation and operation of a principles based Indigenous evaluation framework and accompanying list of evaluation priorities? (Section: Key enabling mechanisms for effective evaluation)</li> <li>• What resources are currently available to build and strengthen evaluative capacity among program implementation staff, service delivery organisations and community stakeholders? (Section: Improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity)</li> <li>• How can the cultural capability of evaluation commissioners and practitioners and their respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, knowledges, history and values be demonstrated and improved? (Section: Cultural Capability)</li> <li>• Is evaluation funded out of program budgets or from a central evaluation budget within agencies? (Section: Planning for Evaluation Early in the Policy cycle)</li> <li>• How can the costs to government and communities of engaging more meaningfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during evaluation be better integrated into existing and future program and evaluation budgets? (Section: Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into evaluation)</li> <li>• How much scope do you consider there is to improve evaluative culture, capability and capacity for both those who undertake evaluations, and those who participate in the evaluation process? And how might improvements be achieved? (Section: Improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity)</li> <li>• What impediments are there to improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity and what can be done to address these? (Section: Improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity)</li> </ul>