

Attachment A: Commonwealth Information in relation to Draft Recommendations

Draft Recommendation	Response
<p>Draft Recommendation 1: Appointing an organisation to lead data development under the Agreement</p>	<p>Currently there is a degree of fragmentation in relation to data and data development under the National Agreement (noting the ongoing role of various bodies including Government Parties, the Coalition of Peaks, other community organisations, academic institutions and business). Strengthening governance arrangements could be beneficial.</p> <p>If an organisation were appointed it could benefit from a broad set of expertise beyond data. This could include, for example, evaluation expertise and also expertise in partnering with Indigenous communities and organisations.</p> <p>The remit of the proposed organisation in the draft report is focused on performance monitoring. In order to meet the intended outcomes of the Priority Reforms, a broader remit, including working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations might apply. As performance monitoring may be more focused on outputs and short term outcomes, this organisation could lead periodic, formal evaluations to assess progress towards meeting the Priority Reform's long term outcomes.</p> <p>To help standardise data development, governance and sharing across the APS, it could be useful for this organisation to have in its remit the carriage of and provision of support to Commonwealth agencies to build consistency in data development and sharing to embed the principles from the <i>Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data Practical guidance for the Australian Public Service</i>. The proposed organisation could also abide by principles of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing which stipulates data is shared by default where it is secure, lawful, and ethical to do so.</p> <p>Similarly, there may be benefit in undertaking a review of the Australian Government Data and Digital Government Strategy to consider the scope of content related to governments sharing data, undertaking data-related activities, and partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on data-related issues.</p>

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	<p>The Data and Reporting Working group (DRWG) is currently responsible for monitoring data development under the National Agreement. The DRWG is co-chaired by the NIAA and the Coalition of Peaks, and reports to the Closing the Gap Partnership Working Group (PWG) on key deliverables.</p> <p>Monitoring the implementation of the Data Development Plan (DDP) is a key component of the DRWG's role. The DDP was approved by Joint Council in August 2022. All Parties to the National Agreement are responsible for incorporating actions under the DDP as part of the governance of their ongoing Closing the Gap Implementation Plans (clause 106 of the National Agreement).</p> <p>To support Parties in monitoring and undertaking data development items, the DRWG will provide a traffic light report with the status of all items under the DDP by the second Joint Council meeting of each year. This report will assist Parties in considering updates to their Implementation Plans, keep PWG informed on progress against items and assist with Joint Council's consideration of implementation progress.</p>
<p>Draft Recommendation 2: Designating a senior leader or leadership group to drive jurisdiction-wide change</p>	<p>The Commonwealth Secretaries Board is responsible for the stewardship of the Australian Public Service (APS), including identifying and setting the strategic priorities for the APS. This includes an elevated responsibility for driving the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms across the Commonwealth. For example, the Partnership Priorities Committee (a sub-committee of the Secretaries Board) seeks to steer better policy outcomes for Australians by embedding partnership culture and behaviour in the public service to ensure consistent, natural and early engagement and co-design with all sectors, including First Nations People.</p> <p>Secretaries are required to report to Secretaries Board on progress towards implementing Priority Reforms for their department.</p> <p>The Joint Working Group is a suitable forum of Commonwealth Deputy Secretaries and senior representatives from the Coalition of Peaks to drive jurisdiction-wide change.</p> <p>The Chief Operating Officers Committee has significant authority to drive accountability through the public sector.</p>

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	<p>There may be scope to strengthen these arrangements, including through greater strategic planning of meetings and better communication and linkages between leadership groups.</p>
<p>Draft Recommendation 3: Embed responsibility for improving cultural capability and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into public sector employment requirements</p>	<p>Under the new APS SES Performance Framework, assessment of behaviour (how outcomes are delivered) is core to an individual's performance. All SES employees will have expectations of behaviours and outcomes as a core requirement in duty statements, performance agreements and performance assessments. While expectations of behaviour can be determined between the SES employee and their supervisor, performance agreements must include a commitment to demonstrating how individual SES will extend their own cultural learning, and demonstrate how they are contributing to culturally safe workplaces, programs and policies.</p> <p>In the 2023-24 Budget, \$3.4 million was provided over two years to boost Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the Australian Public Service, to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior executives, build the leadership pipeline, and enhance the cultural capability of the APS.</p> <p>Following the consideration of an initial tranche of proposed amendments to the <i>Public Services Act 1999</i> in the context of APS Reform, the Commonwealth may explore further opportunities to review the <i>Public Services Act 1999</i> and related legislation to consider if amendments are required to support working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>
<p>Draft Recommendation 4: Central agencies leading changes to Cabinet, Budget, funding and contracting processes</p>	<p>As part of the Commonwealth's efforts to take forward commitments in clauses 55 and 67(d) of the National Agreement, changes have been made to the Cabinet Handbook, the Budget Process Operating Rules (BPORs), New Policy Proposal processes and Estimates Memorandum to assist agencies to align Budget proposals with the National Agreement. Associated Agency Guidance in the Estimates Memorandum was drafted in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.</p> <p>A review of the BPORs is currently underway and has involved formal APS-wide consultation on the BPORs' operation and effectiveness, including consideration of the content relating to Closing the Gap requirements.</p>

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	<p>Treasury is also advancing work to develop a cross jurisdictional network of Treasuries First Nations Policy Units. This is intended to support better communications and coordination of First Nations policy development and monitoring by the Commonwealth, and the states and territories.</p> <p>A number of agencies are also working with Central Agencies to develop and reform commissioning processes to support ACCOs to successfully apply for and obtain grants and contracts that they are best placed to deliver.</p>
<p>Draft Recommendation 5: Include a statement on Closing the Gap in government agencies' annual reports</p>	<p>A number of Commonwealth agencies already include statements in relation to Closing the Gap in corporate plans and/or annual reports including, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Department of Social Services, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the National Indigenous Australians Agency.</p> <p>Other agencies are progressing towards this approach. For example, the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) has included a statement in its Stretch RAP about how the department is progressing toward Closing the Gap. DISR is also working to develop metrics to report on progress under this Stretch RAP.</p>
<p>Draft Recommendation 6: Publish all the documents developed under the Agreement</p>	<p>The Commonwealth publishes (or makes available for publication) a range of Commonwealth outputs developed under the Joint Council, Partnership Working Group and Joint Working Group governance arrangements. For example, the Early Childhood Policy Partnership publishes key documents to the Department of Education website, when agreed by the membership or Joint Council, as appropriate. These include work plans, strategic frameworks and meeting outcomes.</p> <p>Further work is required to consider how issues like how expenditure review and evaluation might be published or reported in a meaningful way.</p>