

**Submission to the Productivity Commission's Indigenous  
Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper  
Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group on Family Violence**

The Victorian [Aboriginal Justice Caucus](#) (AJC) is a self-determining body that works in partnership with the Victorian Government to improve Aboriginal justice outcomes, family and community safety, and reduce over-representation in the criminal justice system. Its members are the Chairs of the [Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees](#), Aboriginal community leaders, and representatives from Aboriginal peak bodies and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. The AJC are signatories to *Burra Lotjpa Dungaludja* ([Aboriginal Justice Agreement phase 4](#)).

The AJC Working Group on Family Violence was established following the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence to promote [self-determination and cultural safety](#) in the Victorian justice response to family violence.

September 2019

ABORIGINAL JUSTICE CAUCUS WORKING GROUP ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Contents**

Response to the consultation questions in the Issues Paper ..... 3

Members of the Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group on Family Violence ..... 13

    Ms Marion Hansen (Chair) ..... 13

    Aunty Jemmes Handy ..... 13

    Ms Linda Bamblett ..... 13

    Aileen Blackburn ..... 14

    Mr Alfie Bamblett ..... 14

    Ms Antoinette Braybrook ..... 15

    Mr Tony Lovett ..... 15

    Ms Antoinette Gentile ..... 16

    Ms Nicola Perry ..... 16

    Ms Nicole LeSage ..... 16

    Mr Matthew Graham ..... 17

Attachment A: Aboriginal Justice Caucus’s principles for ways of working ..... 18

Attachment B: Evaluation Standards in the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4 ..... 19

References ..... 20

**Response to the consultation questions in the Issues Paper**

1. *Questions on objectives: What objectives should a strategy for evaluating policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seek to achieve? To what extent are the evaluation practices of Australian Government agencies consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples? How could practices be improved in this respect?*

An Indigenous Evaluation Strategy should aim to guide evaluations that centre the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, capture the lessons learned, improve future policies and programs, and provide a basis for accountability at every stage of an evaluation. The outcomes of an evaluation are for effective policies and programs that promote self-determination and to reduce disadvantage and achieve equity in relation to key social and economic indicators such as child mortality, life expectancy, educational attainment, employment outcomes, housing security, and access to a fair justice system.

There is currently no framework to deliver good practice evaluation that is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This requires an evaluation strategy that is built on the principle of self-determination, and an evaluation approach that is culturally safe and supported by an Indigenous-led mechanism for good governance that is resourced, technically skilled, independent, and able to hold government to account.

A culturally safe policy or program is one that is free from discrimination, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel safe to express their identity, where the present-day impacts of historical traumas are acknowledged, where the unique role of family and community is understood, and where community-led solutions are prioritised.

Evidence from the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence found that culturally safe family violence services are more likely to be effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and that Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCOs) are more likely to deliver culturally safe services.<sup>1</sup>

The term cultural safety comes from the work of Maori nurses in the 1980s. It arose from their observation that quality health care cannot be delivered if practitioners were unaware of the power dynamics between health care provider and patient, and that patients who felt unsafe were not able to fully benefit from the care being offered or would avoid seeking the care in the first place.

Cultural safety standards have been part of the curriculum assessment process for New Zealand nurses since 1992. Cultural safety training is different from cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity training, which is about the practices, beliefs and values of another culture. A culturally safe approach recognises how unequal power in evaluation processes is a microcosm of broader social inequalities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations are best placed to design and deliver culturally safe evaluation methods. For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait evaluators, culturally safe approaches encourage self-reflection (how one's own culture impacts on one's professional

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016). Report and recommendations. Retrieved 14 August 2019 from <http://www.rcfv.com.au/Report-Recommendations>

practice), examination of the power dynamics, and empowerment of those affected to determine and express their own sense of safety.

Every step of the way, the aim of the Strategy must be to serve a culturally safe agenda which is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ACCOs should lead and control evaluation processes from the start, as well as having control over the outcomes and results of these processes, according to principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty and data governance. As noted by the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum in their submission to this Issues Paper:

“There is a difference between cultural awareness, cultural competence, culturally responsive or safe evaluations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led evaluation. The difference is self-determination.”<sup>2</sup>

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

The working group supports the main components of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy proposed by the Commission and illustrated in Figure 1 below. Please see the working group’s comments included in the orange boxes.

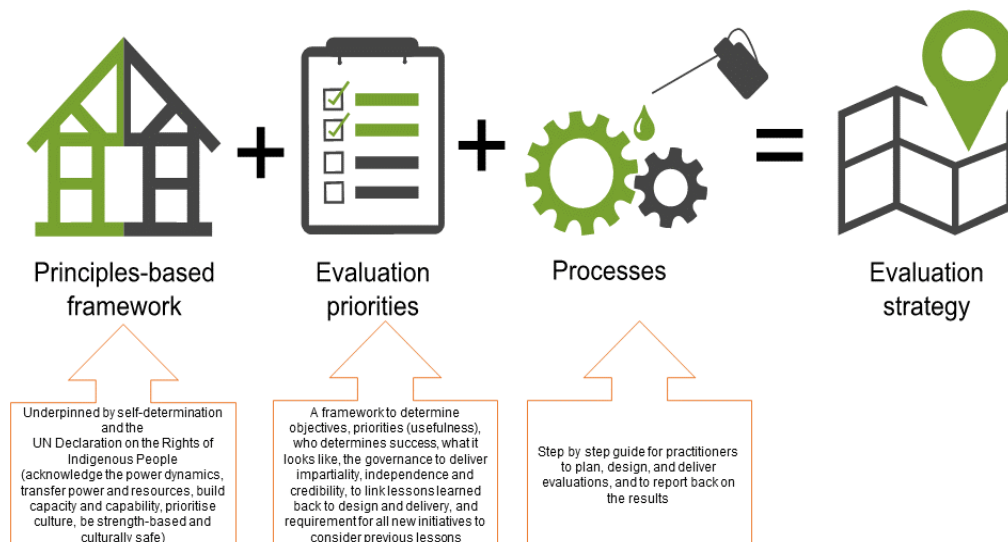


Figure 1: Working Group comments on components of the Strategy

3. *Question on applying the strategy to mainstream programs: What is the best way to address mainstream programs in the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy?*

The best way to address mainstream programs in the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is to lift the cultural safety capability of the mainstream workforce. This is particularly important given the proportion of funding that goes to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) has

<sup>2</sup> National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum, Submission to the Productivity Commission’s Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper, August 2019, page 7.

fallen in recent years, while funding to mainstream organisations classified as Indigenous spending has increased.<sup>3</sup> Increasing the proportion and total amount of funding that goes to ACCOs, and building the internal capacity of ACCOs to evaluate their own programs, must always be the priority. The Strategy should also provide mechanisms to ensure that relevant mainstream programs are accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Cultural safety is an essential part of closing the gap in health and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.<sup>4</sup> A culturally safe evaluation strategy will lift evaluation standards across the board, not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A culturally safe approach should be integrated into all evaluations so that it becomes standard practice across all programs.

4. *Question on government programs: What can be learned from (the Indigenous Procurement Policy, the Community Development Program, Closing the Gap, Indigenous Australia's Health Program, Indigenous Advancement Strategy, and the National Disability Strategy) that would be useful for the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy?*

The key lessons learned from the last 3 phases of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (representing 15 years of policy development and service delivery) is that self-determination should underpin the evaluation strategy, and cultural safety should underpin the evaluation approach.

Greater self-determination means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations exercise leadership and strategic decision making in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies and programs that affect them. This is supported by the findings of the 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and the last 3 evaluation cycles for the Aboriginal Justice Agreements (phase 1 to 3), which found that ACCOs consistently deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Self-determination enablers can be built into the policy process by ensuring a higher proportion of funding goes directly to community identified solutions in response to community identified problems. In this way, the different views about the objectives of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy which are presented in the Issues Paper (to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, increase input into the policy process, build evidence about what works, and ensure value for money) are recognised as equally relevant and not mutually exclusive.

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<sup>3</sup> Wahlquist, C (2017). *Share of funding to Indigenous-run groups falls over past nine years*. Retrieved on 10 September 2019 from <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/oct/26/funding-of-indigenous-run-groups-plummeted-over-past-nine-years>

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, G (2019). *Australia must embrace 'cultural safety' if we are to close the gap*. Retrieved 23 August 2019 from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/16/australia-must-embrace-cultural-safety-if-we-are-to-close-the-gap>

5. *Questions on evaluation approaches and methods: Which evaluation approaches and methods are particularly suited to policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? What factors (for example, circumstances or program characteristics) should be considered when choosing the most appropriate evaluation approach or method, and why? Which evaluation approaches are best suited to encouraging self-determination and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges? Why are they suitable? In what ways can Indigenous and Western evaluation approaches be successfully combined? What are the benefits, costs and challenges associated with implementing randomised control trials? What are the most satisfactory alternatives, and why?*

The working group supports the components of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy proposed in the Issues Paper: principles to underpin the Strategy, tools to identify evaluation priorities, and a process to promote an evaluation culture.

The principles should represent the values that will underpin all other components of the Strategy. The working group recommends self-determination as the principle that underpins the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy and cultural safety as the principle that underpins the evaluation approach. Thus, evaluation methods that are most appropriate are which promote self-determination and are developed and undertaken in a culturally safe way.

Self-determination underpins the evaluation standards in phase 4 of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement in Victoria. The evaluation standards draw on evidence gathered from the last 3 phases of the Agreement, representing 15 years and three evaluation cycles. They are a practical tool for evaluators to approach an evaluation process in a culturally safe way that promotes self-determination.

Evaluation methods should not be prescribed in the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy, rather practitioners should be supported to determine what is the most appropriate method for the specific policy or program and how to apply it in a culturally safe way.

6. *Questions on the challenges of evaluation: How can the challenges and complexities associated with undertaking evaluation be overcome — both generally, and in Indigenous policy specifically? In what circumstances is evaluation of policies and programs unlikely to be feasible or cost-effective?*

Many of the key challenges associated with evaluating programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people relate to the present-day and ongoing impacts of historical injustices. This includes the inherently unequal power relations between policy makers and those impacted, between program funders and service delivery organisations, and between service delivery organisations and service users. These challenges can be overcome if the evaluation approach (or way of working) is culturally safe and there is genuine transfer of power in terms of who initiates, undertakes and benefits from evaluations.

A key way to bring this about is to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are at the centre of designing and implementing evaluation processes and determining measures of success.

7. *Questions on evaluation practice in Australia: 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? 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? What can we learn from evaluation systems and practice at the state and territory level? In what ways are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations contributing to policy and program evaluation? How do we better enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to lead evaluation and strengthen their evaluation capability? How effectively do government agencies work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations when evaluating policies and programs? What can agencies do better?*

Successful evaluations are those that:

- promote self-determination by transferring power, decision-making and resources to the Aboriginal community through their ACCOs
- are culturally safe and acknowledge that there are power dynamics that can shape the way projects are initiated, designed and delivered (contextual awareness)
- are Aboriginal community-led (through their ACCOs), strengthens culture, enhances positive connections to family, kith and kin, and recognises the resilience of Aboriginal people
- understand and respond to trauma and its impacts, aim to restore and repair harm, and
- aim to improve outcomes for and serve an agenda determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Evaluations that promote systemic and institutional bias or are top-down and paternalistic do not improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mainstream organisations should be supported to undertake culturally safe evaluations. This should be coupled with a much more significant focus on building and resourcing the internal evaluation capacity of ACCOs. As discussed by the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum in their submission to this Issues Paper:

“Unless there is a constant and intentional effort to build a pool of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluators, or build the capacity of organisations already delivering programs, we will only ever move between evaluations done “to”, “for” and at best “with” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We will also be stuck in a constant cycle of educating and resourcing non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluators and commissioners to be ‘culturally safe’.”<sup>5</sup>

ACCOs must be supported to lift their evaluation capability and reduce the administrative burden associated with responding to top-down or externally imposed evaluations.

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<sup>5</sup> National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum, Submission to the Productivity Commission’s Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper, August 2019, page 10.

8. *Questions on evaluation overseas: What lessons can we learn from evaluation arrangements in overseas jurisdictions? Are there any particularly beneficial international models for the evaluation of policies and programs affecting Indigenous people? What makes them effective?*

Some elements of the OECD Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance are relevant to the development of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy<sup>6</sup>. The following points are adapted from the OECD document:

- agencies should have an evaluation policy with clearly established guidelines and methods and with clear definitions of roles and responsibilities
- the evaluation process should be impartial and independent from the process concerned with policy-making and the delivery and management of project funding
- the evaluation process must be as open as possible with results made widely available
- for evaluations to be useful, evaluation results must be an integral part of program planning, and
- the clear identification of the objective that an activity is to achieve is critical for objective evaluation.

9. *Questions on relevant principles for an evaluation framework: What principles should be included in an Indigenous Evaluation Framework to be used by Australian Government agencies? How should an Indigenous Evaluation Framework differ from a general evaluation framework for government policies and programs?*

Self-determination should be the overarching principle that underpins an Indigenous Evaluation Framework.

10. *Questions on planning for evaluation early in the policy cycle: To what extent is evaluation planned for during the design and development of policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Is evaluation funded out of program budgets or from a central evaluation budget within agencies? What are the key actions and decisions agencies should take when planning early for evaluation?*

Evaluation and its requirements should be an integral part of program planning and be part of the program budget. When planning early for an evaluation, agencies should be clear about the purpose of the evaluation, for example, to improve future policies or programs through lessons learned, to be accountable (to funders, the public and those affected) and to be transparent.

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<sup>6</sup> Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (1991). *Principles for the evaluation of development assistance*. Retrieved on 15 September 2019 from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/publicationsanddocuments.htm>



11. *Questions on incorporating Indigenous perspectives into evaluation: 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? What are the barriers to further increasing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during Australian Government evaluation projects? 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?*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and ACCOs know what needs to be done, why and how. The best way to incorporate their knowledge and expertise into the evaluation process is to ensure policies and programs respond to community-identified needs and utilise community-tested solutions. This requires that community input is not just added into a pre-determined evaluation process as an afterthought. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community expertise and leadership must be part of the evaluation process from the very beginning.

12. *Questions on the independence of evaluations and evaluators: What degree of independence between evaluators and policy makers/program delivery areas is necessary and/or desirable? 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?*

The working group supports the need for independent and impartial evaluations and evaluators and believes that the best way to achieve this is through good governance. This will require government support and capability building both for mainstream agencies and ACCOs.

13. *Questions on ethical evaluation: How do Australian Government agencies currently deal with ethical issues associated with evaluation? 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? In what circumstances should evaluation projects be subject to formal ethics review? In what circumstances should evaluation projects be exempt from formal ethics review? What are the time and cost implications of embedding an ethics review process into Australian Government evaluations?*

An ethical approach is one that promotes self-determination and is culturally safe. This means a deliberate focus in the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy on the relational aspect of the evaluation process, looking at how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be central to the decision-making process, central in defining what a successful evaluation outcome looks like and central to how the lessons can be used to improve future policies and programs.

14. *Question on cultural capability: 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?*

One way in which the cultural capability of evaluation commissioners and practitioners can be improved is through a mutually respectful exchange program with ACCOs. For example, where evaluation practitioners from mainstream agencies are seconded for a period of up to 6 months in an ACCO (while retaining all their employment conditions), and where ACCO staff are seconded in mainstream organisations for a similar period. An exchange of this kind will lift capability across the board, most significantly by building the evaluation capacity of ACCOs as well as lifting cultural safety within mainstream organisations.

15. *Questions on evaluation methods and data: 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? 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?*

A culturally safe approach is one that promote self-determination. Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (community leaders, ACCOs and service users) are empowered to determine what matters, what success looks like, what is important, what data should be considered and why. A culturally safe approach means examining the power dynamics and empowering those being evaluated to determine whether the approach is safe for them.

16. *Questions on evaluation transparency: 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? Should all evaluation reports be published? In what circumstances might it be appropriate to not publish evaluation reports? 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?*

The objectives of an evaluation should be agreed at the start of a project and should be governed by what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and organisations want. This includes when and how results will be released and how it will be used to improve future policy design and project delivery. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty is a key aspect of this conversation.

Further, an ethical evaluation that is transparent and culturally safe is more likely to deliver lessons that are useful for the design and delivery of future policies and programs. Thus, elevating the lessons learnt and focusing less on an overall (positive or negative) result.

17. *Question on the key enabling mechanisms for effective evaluation: 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?*

Enabling mechanisms for effective evaluations include:

- Investing in lifting the evaluation capability and capacity of ACCOs
- Investing in lifting cultural safety capability and capacity of the evaluation workforce in mainstream agencies
- Promote self-determination (transfer decision making power, build capacity wherever possible, be culturally safe, acknowledge present day impacts of historical wrongs)

18. *Questions on determining evaluation priorities: What principles should be used to determine evaluation priorities? What policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (or broader policy and program areas) should be the highest priority for evaluation, and why? How often should evaluation priorities be reviewed? How should the process for reviewing priorities be structured?*

- Does it promote self-determination?
- How will it be useful, how will the results be used?
- Who determines what is successful?
- Credibility – was the process credible?

19. *Questions on improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity: 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? What resources are currently available to build and strengthen evaluative capacity among program implementation staff, service delivery organisations and community stakeholders? What impediments are there to improving evaluative culture, capability and capacity and what can be done to address these?*

Evaluation culture will be improved when the benefits of evaluation are evident in better policy and program design and delivery. This can be facilitated by investing in capability and capacity uplift in both mainstream organisations and ACCOs, for example:

- invest in ACCOs to lift evaluation capability, data collection and analysis, data sovereignty, good governance and stakeholder management, and
- invest in mainstream organisations to undertake evaluations that are culturally safe and establish good governance and stakeholder management processes.

20. *Question on data for evaluation: To what extent are current data governance arrangements effective? What can be done to improve arrangements?*

An Indigenous Evaluation Strategy that promotes self-determination ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their interests guide the process of data collection and analysis. This will require concerted effort to lift data collection and analysis capabilities within ACCOs, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can shape what data should be collected, and for what purpose, and so that data that is collected is relevant and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander end-users.<sup>7</sup>

21. *Questions on identifying and translating knowledge from evaluation: 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?*

For evaluation findings to be useful and meaningful, the evaluation process itself should be culturally safe, allow for objectives to be clarified, be communicated transparently, and be open to learning and follow-up action. Further, it should:

- be relevant to those developing and implementing policies and programs
- be accessible (available to program planners and in plain English), and
- be a genuine partnership with ACCOs, and service users (reflect the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

22. *Questions on evaluation monitoring and compliance mechanisms: What approaches and models could be implemented to ensure that Australian Government agencies comply with the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy? How should agencies' conduct against the Strategy be monitored?*

Require agencies to report annually on how they have aligned their policies and processes to the Strategy.

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<sup>7</sup> Anderson, I (2017). *Democratising Indigenous data*. Retrieved on 16 September from <https://www.themandarin.com.au/86531-democratising-indigenous-data/>

23. *Question on revising the Indigenous evaluation strategy over time: How do you think the process for reviewing and revising the Strategy should be structured?*

Speak to those affected, ACCOs, mainstream organisations funded to delivery Indigenous programs and end users.

24. *Question on engagement suggestions: How and who should we engage to maximise community and expert input to this project?*

A culturally safe approach will maximise community input. This is an approach that does not diminish, demean or disempower the identity or wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their organisations. It is an approach that empowers the mainstream workforce to examine the inherently unequal power relationship between those who develop policy and those impacted, between program funders and service delivery organisations, and between service delivery organisations and service recipients. These are critical considerations because how the objectives of the policy or program was determined will influence who gets to decide what success looks like and how the results will be used.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community leaders are more likely to want to be involved in an evaluation process if their expertise and knowledge determines that process and influences the outcome. This is more likely to occur if the policy or program being evaluated was funded in response to a community identified need and to promote community identified solutions.

**Members of the Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group on Family Violence**

**Ms Marion Hansen (Chair)**

Ms Hansen is a Gamilaroi woman from the Kamilaroi Nation in Moree, New South Wales. She has dedicated her life to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, focusing her work on human rights, health and the wellbeing of women.

Ms Hansen delivered a paper on Aboriginal Health at the United Nations (UN) in Geneva in 1995 and attended and actively participated in various meetings in relation to human rights, health and Indigenous incarceration rates. She also attended many meetings at the UN in New York about the rights of Indigenous peoples and women's rights. She credits this time as a valuable part of her learning.

Ms Hansen has an abiding interest in the delivery of culturally safe and trauma informed services. She is a foundation member of Ngwala Willumbong Cooperative, where she served as Chair and Director over many years. In 1997, she managed Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre and Rehabilitation Services. She took a keen interest in the establishment of Djirra as a specialist family violence service for Aboriginal women in Victoria and for the past 14 years, served as Chair of its Governance Board.

**Aunty Jemmes Handy**

Aunty Jemmes is Wiradjuri. She is passionate about working with Aboriginal children, young men and women to address family violence.

Aunty Jemmes is Chair of the Loddon Mallee Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (RAJAC). The RAJAC network is based on recommendation two of the final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. She is also Chair of the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee (LAJAC).

She is the Victoria Police Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) in Mildura. She was previously Liaison Officer at Mildura Base Hospital.

She is deeply involved in a range of community building programs in Mildura, for example, the culturally appropriate holiday program for Aboriginal primary-school children called Hope, Aboriginal Community Justice Panel, Koori Night Patrol, Koori Scout and Cub, Neighbourhood Watch and East End Community House.

In 2007 she received the Excellence in Policing Family Violence Leadership Award. This was the first time a public servant and not a police member received this award.

In 2015, she was awarded the Public Service Medal in recognition of her outstanding work in supporting the Aboriginal community, particularly young people, in both health and policing. In the same year, she was awarded the Statewide Koori Community Justice Award for her work to promote positive justice outcomes for children and young people. The award recognises the innovative and creative education and employment programs for young people and the contribution of Koori Elders.

**Ms Linda Bamblett**

Ms Bamblett is a proud Bangerang-Wiradjuri woman. She is CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association (VACSAL). She has worked at Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services as well as VACSAL Family and Children's Services. She holds a Certificate IV and a Diploma of Youth Work and Business (Frontline Management).

Ms Bamblett sits on many committees. She is a founding member of Yappera Children's Services and is the Secretary of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI). The VAEAI provide advice on education

## ABORIGINAL JUSTICE CAUCUS WORKING GROUP ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

matters, monitors education trends and advocates for the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Ms Bamblett is Treasurer of the Aboriginal Community Elders Service and sits on the Board of the Fitzroy Stars Football club. She is the Chairperson of the North Metro RAJAC and Co-Chair of the North Metro Dhelk Dja Regional Action Group (formerly the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group - IFVRAG). Ms Bamblett has also been acknowledged for her decade-long commitment to the AJF.

### **Aileen Blackburn**

Ms Blackburn is an Aboriginal advocate for local, regional and broader rights and affairs, and has been so since she was 17 years old. She credits her large family and their dedication to the advancement of Aboriginal people and their communities as a key influencer in her life.

Ms Blackburn holds important knowledge and cultural expertise handed down by Elders both past and present. She draws on this knowledge and expertise in her work on cultural heritage and land management, community development across health, family violence prevention and response, and in education and housing. Her current commitments include:

- Vice Chair, East Gippsland Aboriginal Regional Justice Group;
- Chairperson, South Monero Aboriginal Women's Corporation;
- East Gippsland Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Alpines Group;
- Cann River/Orbost LINS Representative;
- NSW Elder Representative NSW Indigenous Waters;
- Indigenous Cultural Advisory Bundian Ways Cultural Trail, Women's Yams Project Eden NSW; and
- Director Bolga/Manero/Yuin Aboriginal Alliance Group.

Ms Blackburn holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (ANU) and a Bachelor of Arts Degree (University of SA).

### **Mr Alfie Bamblett**

Mr Bamblett is Wiradjuri-Yorta Yorta on his father's side and DjaDja Wurung-Kerrupmara on his mother's side.

He is the Coordinator of the Indigenous Men's Resource and Advisory Service (IMRAS), a statewide program of VACSAL. The IMRAS works with local Indigenous Family Violence Strategy networks to listen to Aboriginal men and to inspire them through mentors, ambassadors and role models.

In 2010, Mr Bamblett contributed to the development of the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Family Violence Work, the *Indigenous Family Violence: Good Practice Guidelines for Men's Groups*, the *Darebin Koori Family Violence Police Protocols*, Timeout Service Model, and Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Help Cards.

Since the Royal Commission into Family Violence handed down its report in 2016, Mr Bamblett has contributed to the Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum, the *Support and Safety Hubs Statewide Concept*, the *Family Violence Services and Accommodation Guideline* and the *Reporting on Aboriginal People's Experiences of Family Violence Media Kit*.

Mr Bamblett Co-Chairs the Northern Metro *Dhelk Dja* Regional Action Group and is a member of the RAJAC and the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (VAJAC).

### **Ms Antoinette Braybrook**

Ms Braybrook is an Aboriginal woman who was born in Victoria on Wurundjeri country. Ms Braybrook's grandfather and mother's line is through the Kuku Yalanji, North Queensland.

Ms Braybrook is the CEO of Djirra (formerly the Victorian Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service), a position she has held since the service was established 15 years ago. Djirra provides holistic, culturally safe and specialist legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing family violence – predominantly women. Djirra also designs and delivers important, community-based early intervention and prevention programs and undertakes policy and law reform work to improve access to justice, strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's resilience and reduce vulnerability to violence.

Ms Braybrook has held the elected position of National Convenor of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum) since 2012. The National FVPLS Forum is the peak body for the 14 FVPLSs in Australia.

Ms Braybrook's advocacy work includes positions held on advisory groups, expert panels and consultative roles to state and federal organisations. She has also received the following awards:

- 2015 Law Institute of Victoria: Access to Justice/Pro Bono Award;
- 2015 Australian Centre for Leadership for Women award for Sustaining Women's Empowerment;
- 2016 Harvard Club of Victoria's Non-Profit Fellowship Program to attend Strategic Perspectives in Non-profit Management program at Harvard Business School, Boston USA; and
- 2017 Inspirational Women of Yarra Award.

As a highly regarded public speaker, who seeks to give a voice to Aboriginal victim survivors of violence, Ms Braybrook was honoured to jointly present with Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjo at the UN Commission on the Status of Women Conference in New York in 2013.

Ms Braybrook was recently honoured on the Gender Justice Legacy Wall in recognition for her contribution to gender justice. The Legacy Wall celebrates 15 years of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and 20 years of the Rome Statute, the treaty that established it.

### **Mr Tony Lovett**

Mr Lovett is a Gunditjmara man and father. The Gunditjmara are the traditional owners of the Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Woolsthorpe and Portland areas. Gunditjmara comes from 'Gunditj', meaning belonging and 'mara' meaning a person of the area.

The strong thread weaving through Mr Lovett's life is people, community, music and sport. He is actively involved in a wide range of community building initiatives, including the Ballarat Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Koorie Engagement Action Group, Murray River Marathon – Blues and Brothers team, and Ballarat Masters Football Club. He facilitated two 'Families are Forever' regional camps with the Grampians IFVRAG. He is a past President of the Sebastopol Football and Netball Club and Ballarat AFL Masters Football Club.

Mr Lovett is a Community Services Officer with VACSAL, Chair of the Grampians RAJAC, President of Victorian Country AFL Masters, Coordinator of Dungulayin Mileka – Massive Murray Paddle Program, and a musician who has performed in Australia and overseas with many acts in various capacities.

Mr Lovett was the City of Ballarat Citizen of the Year in 2013, and the City of Ballarat Youth Services Award Youth Ally recipient in 2014.

### **Ms Antoinette Gentile**

Antoinette is a Yorta Yorta woman raised in Broadmeadows, Victoria. She has dedicated her life to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians through partnerships with Aboriginal communities and by building capability within government to listen to and hear their voices and aspirations.

She has had a varied career in both the community and public sectors. In the mid-1990s, she served with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, as a staff member, a Board member, and as CEO. In the early 2000s, she joined the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), and is currently the Director of the Koori Justice Unit. The Unit works to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians and is the primary contact point to the justice portfolio for Aboriginal communities.

One of her greatest privileges was working alongside Aunty Joy Murphy and Professor Mark Rose on the Victorian Implementation Review of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (2003-2005). The outcome of which was 164 Recommendations made to the Victorian Government, which influenced the second Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement in 2006. She cites this period in her career as one of the most challenging and rewarding, a defining experience that she draws upon both in a personal and professional sense.

### **Ms Nicola Perry**

Ms Perry is Ngarrindjeri from South Australia who has lived in Swan Hill for many years. She is a proud mother of three who is passionate about building a strong and resilient community.

Ms Perry began her career as a Preschool & Early Childhood educator. She was Home & Community Care (HACC) Coordinator with Swan Hill Aboriginal Services.

Ms Perry is currently a Victoria Police ACLO based in Swann Hill. She is the Project Officer for the Loddon Mallee LAJAC, and acting EO for the Loddon Mallee RAJAC.

Ms Perry's abiding interest in resilience drives her involvement in a variety of community and advocacy roles, including:

- Mallee & District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) Board of Directors;
- Chair of the Swan Hill MDAS Advisory Committee;
- Chairperson of the Swan Hill NAIDOC Committee for the past four years;
- Co-Chair the Swan Hill Family Violence Police Protocols committee; and
- Deputy Chair of the Swan Hill Aboriginal Community Justice Panel.

### **Ms Nicole LeSage**

Nicole LeSage is a Gunnai woman from Far East Gippsland. She was born and raised in Orbost and now lives in the Latrobe Valley where she has been for the past 23 years.

Nicole has Masters in Early Childhood and Criminology and has dedicated the past 23 years to working with mob throughout Gippsland. Nicole has worked as a drug and alcohol worker at Bendin House at the Morwell Aboriginal Cooperative, a Koori Youth Justice worker and was part of the team that established the County Court Koori Court in Gippslands. For the past 10 years Nicole has been the Executive Officer for RAJAC Gippsland.

Nicole is a Respected Person of her community and remains passionate about improved justice outcomes and self-determination within her mob. In equal measure, Nicole is passionate about her family.



**Mr Matthew Graham**

Matthew comes from a strong family from multiple language groups, the McGuinness family (Wiradjuri) and the Nelson family (Yorta Yorta and DjaDja Wurung).

His interest is in community building and community resilience. He is currently the RAJAC EO in the Grampians region of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. He has worked in multiple areas from mental health, Alcohol and other drugs, and Education.

Matthew draws inspiration from his family and the strong Aboriginal leaders who have forged a path towards self-determination and a strong and healthy future. He is guided by the rich wellspring of knowledge and tradition from all those who have walked the path before him to build the next level for the Aboriginal community.

**Attachment A: Aboriginal Justice Caucus's principles for ways of working**

1. **Prioritise self-determination:** Always strive to transfer power, decision-making and resources to the Aboriginal community.
2. **Support cultural strengthening:** Enhance positive connections to family, community and kin to build resilience to setbacks and develop strategies for dealing with hardships.
3. **Be strengths-based:** Respect and honour the strengths and resilience of Aboriginal people, families and communities and build upon these.
4. **Be trauma-informed:** Employ healing approaches that seek to understand and respond to trauma and its impact on individuals, families and communities.
5. **Be restorative:** Aim for the restoration of victims, offenders and communities and repair the harm resulting from the crime, including harm to relationships.
6. **Use therapeutic approaches:** Recognise that at all stages of involvement with the justice system there is potential to make a positive impact on a person's life.
7. **Respond to context:** Recognise and adapt to meet the specific needs and circumstances of people, families, and communities.
8. **Be holistic:** Address the interrelated risk factors for offending in a holistic manner, such as substance abuse, housing, and unemployment.
9. **Protect cultural rights:** Respect the distinct and unique rights of Aboriginal people.
10. **Address unconscious bias:** Identify and respond to systemic racism and discrimination that persists in the justice system.

**Attachment B: Evaluation Standards in the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4**

1. Recognise the rights of Aboriginal people to self-determination and to control, protect, maintain, and develop their cultural heritage, including traditional knowledge and intellectual property.
2. Respect the right of Aboriginal people to full participation in the evaluation, in line with their relevant skills and experiences. The specialist knowledge of particular community members and their potential contributions should be recognised and involved wherever possible and appropriate. There should be Aboriginal input into all aspects of the evaluation, including the design, ownership of data, data interpretation and publication of findings.
3. Accessible and culturally-appropriate informed consent processes that make clear when, how and who will be involved in the evaluation process, what information will be collected, how the information will be recorded and used, the likely risks and benefits arising from participation and the overall potential benefits of an evaluation.
4. Acknowledge the diversity and uniqueness of Aboriginal communities, groups and individuals, including different cultures, experiences, perspectives and languages. Evaluation activities should reflect the different perspectives and experiences and not generalise from one community to others or to all Aboriginal people.
5. Agree on plans for the communication and use of evaluation results. The ownership of evaluation results, and how they will be used, should be agreed at the start of the evaluation with relevant Aboriginal community members and/or appropriate Aboriginal community organisations.
6. Adhere to the Department's ethical and privacy standards.

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