



23 August 2019

Indigenous Evaluation Strategy
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003
www.pc.gov.au/Indigenous-Evaluation

Dear Commissioner

Re: Indigenous evaluation strategy development

The Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Productivity Commission's (PC) Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper.

The MCA represents Australia's exploration, mining and minerals processing industry with a common purpose of advocating responsible policies to support inclusive growth, sustained prosperity and environmental sustainability.

The minerals industry is privileged to partner with diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including Traditional Owners, across the country, particularly in regional and remote Australia. It is estimated there are more than 2000 land use agreements between Traditional Owners and minerals companies.¹

The minerals industry is committed to realising shared and sustainable benefits from minerals development. Industry partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including Traditional Owners aim is to support the achievement of their own aspirations, embracing cultural, social, economic and environmental priorities. The nature of these partnerships can vary from agreements established within land rights and native title regimes to voluntary social responsibility initiatives.

Underpinning these partnerships is recognition of the importance of working together to identify, develop and draw from initiatives and activities to achieve these aspirations.

An important new evaluation resource

Maximising beneficial outcomes from partnerships and agreements between Traditional Owner groups and Indigenous communities is a priority for the minerals industry. Enhancing evaluation practices will assist to improve shared understanding of partnership outcomes and provide strong evidence base for future collaborations.

The minerals industry shares the PC's view that while the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is intended for Commonwealth agencies only, there is significant potential for the framework to be applied more widely. The principles-based design will allow the framework to be adapted to for a range of evaluation purposes, including partnerships between private sector companies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. The framework may also assist to encourage multi-sector collaborations to support the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For example,

¹ M. Langton, [From Conflict to Cooperation](#), Minerals Council of Australia, Canberra, February 2015, pp. 28-29.

subject to the consent of all parties, the framework may support improved sharing and learning from successful collaborations.

To encourage private sector awareness and use of the report, the MCA recommends incorporating specific guidance and references for business in the draft framework paper expected in February 2020. The MCA suggests that recommendations from the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy are discussed with key stakeholders to identify actionable outcomes and discuss what was learned from the process as well as next steps to incorporate results.

The MCA further recommendations feedback is collected about the applicability of the framework to other sectors during the consultation process. I

Indigenous data governance

The minerals industry understands the importance of data sovereignty and intellectual property (IP) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In particular, this was raised by Indigenous stakeholders at both the MCA and Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia's 2018 Meaningful Engagement with Aboriginal Groups Forum and the 2019 MCA Industry and Indigenous Partnerships workshop. Accordingly, the implications to IP should be considered in the development of relevant data governance rules.

Furthermore, a recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 'Linking Indigenous communities to regional development' may usefully inform the Commission's work.² The report includes best practice approaches to support data collection and data sovereignty across five OECD countries, including Australia, the outcomes of which may be relevant for the PC's work.

Supporting engagement

MCA members have partnered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to advance evaluation approaches and methods related to shared initiatives. This includes work undertaken by the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining, the world's leading social performance research institution. The Granites-Kurra Ten Year Plan, a partnership between Newmont Goldcorp, Central Land Council, and Yapa, also provides an innovative example of how evaluation processes can be established during plan development.³

The MCA would welcome the opportunity to facilitate the sharing of lessons from this history of engagement with the PC.

More information

Please do not hesitate to contact Jillian D'Urso, Manager – Social Policy,
if you have any questions or would like more information about this
submission.

Yours sincerely

CHRIS MCCOMBE
GENERAL MANAGER SUSTAINABILITY

² Organization for Economic Development, [Linking Indigenous communities with regional development](#), OECD, Paris, 2019.

³ Newmont Tanami Operation, The Central Land Council and Yapa, [Granites-Kurra Ten Year Plan](#), Newmont, CLC and Yapa, Australia, 2017.