



AIDA

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
ABN: 84 131 668 936

Productivity Commission
Indigenous.evaluation@pc.gov.au

Dear Commissioner

Re: AIDA Submission to the review of the draft Indigenous Evaluation Strategy

As the professional association for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students and doctors, AIDA works to achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and to reach a proportionate number of Indigenous health professionals within the sector. We also strive to create a health system that is culturally safe, high quality, reflective of need, and respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values.

AIDA is a member of the Coalition of Peaks. As such, we are aware of consultations between the Coalition of Peaks and the Productivity Commission about how the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy will take into account the new policy framework provided by the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. Further discussions are also required about how the Strategy is intended to support the Commission's stipulated three yearly review of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. AIDA notes that the Coalition of Peaks will be represented at a workshop organised by the Productivity Commission on 14 August, and that the issues raised above will be further discussed and worked through then.

Further, AIDA would like to offer the following observations regarding the Draft Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.

The development of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy by the Productivity Commission signals an acknowledgement by the Australian Government for the need to provide more frequent and effective evaluations of government programs and projects affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

AIDA is fully supportive of the Strategy's aim to provide a whole of government approach to the evaluation of every stage of selecting, planning, conducting and evaluating those programs and projects.

AIDA is especially supportive of the overarching principle of 'centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledges' being used as the lens through which to view and interpret the Strategy's other principles – credible, useful, ethical and transparent.

AIDA agrees that by embedding evaluation processes viewed through an Indigenous lens at every stage of government project/program development, delivery and implementation, those projects/programs are more likely to have beneficial outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Strategy proposes the creation of a statutory 'Office of Indigenous Policy Evaluation' (OIPE) to work in partnership with a majority Indigenous Council in order to coordinate and review the evaluation priorities and process and ensure the public dissemination of evaluation results. AIDA agrees that coordination of priorities and processes is required, and results need to be available for public scrutiny. AIDA's view regarding an office to coordinate and review the evaluation priorities aligns with that of the National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF). That is, whatever that structural reform may be, it must be Indigenous led.

AIDA's principle concerns would be to ensure that Indigenous governance is central to all evaluations and that the following principles are observed:

- Regular evaluations and the publication of evaluations are mandatory for all government projects/programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations are equal partners in all decision-making processes regarding projects/programs affecting them. Part of the evaluation process has to be the evaluation of whether partnerships are in fact equal.
- Evaluation processes are Indigenous led at all stages of projects/programs.

AIDA is grateful for the opportunity to provide feedback into this process. We would be happy to further engage with you regarding any of the above matters. If you would like to discuss this correspondence, please contact AIDA CEO Ms Monica Barolits-McCabe

Yours sincerely

Dr Kris Rallah-Baker
AIDA President

3 August 2020