
Indigenous Evaluation Strategy

Brief Comments

1 *27 June 2019*

Aboriginal programs are too often drained by government agencies, utilising targeted funds to prop up agencies and mainstream core functions. If we are committed to progression and advancement, funds need to be protected and directed to our ABORIGINAL communities and organisations. There are far too many mainstream organisations that access our funding and claim to work with and for us, however funding accountability is almost nil for these organisations. We can't progress and demonstrate our leadership whilst ever we invest in others to assist us (we don't need more 'mission managers'), especially when we have the capacity ourselves. Real outcomes come from the grass roots up, not from agencies that skim funding for themselves. Aboriginal people are the epitome of determination, success and survival in spite of so much. Government needs to recognise the hardship it places on us. We can't solve real issues without consistent and adequate funding, with realistic timeframes for delivery and evaluation. Over 17 years of community work, I have seen nothing but the stripping back of vital roles, programs and supports for Aboriginal people, yet we are reported against and shamed for not reaching key targets. This is unbelievable. YOU hold the purse strings, YOU inform and influence the system and YOU need to do better for us.

Individual

2 *23 August 2019*

Beyond Blue is pleased to support the development of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy which aligns with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the principle of self-determination. To be meaningful and effective, the introduction of an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy and subsequent evaluations should be led by and co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through their leaders and relevant peak organisations. Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, priorities, perspectives and voices throughout evaluation activities is essential to improving social and emotional wellbeing outcomes.

Australia has some significant mental health challenges. Around 45 per cent of Australian adults experience a mental health issue during their lifetimes. However, the situation is exacerbated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who are around three times as likely to report high or very high levels of psychological distress and twice as likely to die by suicide. The social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been impacted by a raft of major forces, including: the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma; loss of culture and identity; discrimination and racism; growing up in poverty or low socio-economic circumstances. Research by Reconciliation Australia in 2018 showed that 43 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced verbal racial prejudice in the previous six months. This is why a priority for Indigenous evaluation should be a focus on the social and emotional wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the reduction of suicide rates. Improving social and emotional wellbeing is deeply connected to the social determinants of health and critical to achieving the Closing the Gap targets. Without good mental health, it is harder for children to learn, or for adults to get jobs and excel at work. People with poor mental health die significantly earlier than average; ten to 25 years earlier for people who live with severe mental health conditions.

We note that long term investment is needed to deliver quality Indigenous-led or co-designed evaluations for programs and services under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023. Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on evaluation activities of government funded programs, both Indigenous specific and mainstream programs, will ensure current and future Australian governments can support informed solutions that work and make progress in closing the gap.

Beyond Blue Ltd (non-profit organisation)

Brief Comments

3 *26 August 2019*

I would like a culturally respectful NDIS service. There seems to be a severe lack of Cultural competency across its practices.

Individual

4 *4 June 2020*

The conundrum we have evaluating our work for Malpa's Young Doctor projects (we have trained 2,000 children to be child doctors in communities across Australia) is how and what to measure about social impact, especially without making people feel they are being measured and judged. On top of this governments do not give any clarity about what they want measured. Further, the evidence is that evidence makes less than no difference about how government funds projects (see the work of Sara Hudson, Centre for Independent Studies which makes it clear that there is a perverse inverse relationship between what succeeds and what gets funded).

The Malpa Project
