

Evaluation Update

Evaluation of the Australian Government's Investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care

This is the first regular update on progress with the Evaluation of the Australian Government's Investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care.

What is the evaluation about?

The four-year evaluation focuses on the Australian Government's main investment in primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP).

The evaluation aims to strengthen comprehensive primary health care (PHC) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. It will be implemented at three levels to gain local, state/territory and national perspectives and experiences to answer five key questions:

1. How well is the IAHP enabling the PHC system to work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
2. What difference is the IAHP making to the PHC system?
3. What difference is the IAHP making to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
4. How can faster progress be made towards improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
5. How well do the evaluation co-design and methodological approaches achieve the aims of the evaluation?

It will also answer priority questions about comprehensive primary health care and the IAHP that are identified by evaluation participants in up to 20 sites that partner in the evaluation.

The evaluation is being funded by the Australian Department of Health.

What has happened so far?

The evaluation was co-designed over September 2017 – June 2018. This involved the evaluation team establishing and working closely with a Health Sector Co-design Group (HSCG) and engaging with members of the state/territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership Forums and other key organisations. There was also engagement with some community-based groups, including staff and community board members of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs). The co-design phase led to an evaluation design report (available [here](#)), and agreement to proceed with the evaluation in late 2018.

Evaluation partners:



Since late 2018, the evaluation team has:

- Continued to co-design the evaluation with the HSCG, with face-to-face meetings in April, June and October 2019.
- Developed an evaluation framework that includes aims and objectives, a data collection strategy, and analytical approaches that will be used to answer the evaluation questions.
- Begun an assessment process to identify the feasibility of using existing routinely collected data to answer the evaluation questions. Agreement to share their data will be sought from participating partners.
- Developed criteria and engaged with Health Partnership Forums in all states/ territories to select 20 sites to partner in the evaluation.
- Sought ethics approval from 14 ethics committees to engage with potential evaluation participants in sites (13 approvals received to date) and started developing material to support supplementary ethics applications (required before the evaluation collects data).
- Built up the cultural capacity and capability of the team.
- Developed IAHP Yarnes branding with community focus groups.



IAHP Yarnes

Indigenous Australians' Health Programme
Yarning • Action • Reflection • National Evaluation • Systems

What is happening now?

We are currently progressing several streams of work:

- Engaging with the selected sites to seek their agreement to partner in the evaluation – these are mostly ACCHSs, other PHC services that deliver services to a predominantly Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander population, and Primary Health Networks – to share information about the evaluation and seek an invitation to meet to discuss involvement in the evaluation. We expect to have completed initial visits with sites in all states and territories by early 2020. Engagement in the initial site visits has been positive to date.
- Gathering contextual information about the potential sites, including about population, services and IAHP funding.
- Developing the tools that will be used to collect data in sites, and with state/territory and national stakeholders.
- Continuing work on the feasibility assessment of data sources and preparing supplementary ethics applications.

We are genuinely seeking people's input and are meeting with health sector workers and key participants across the country. Those not able to meet with the evaluation team, and anyone else interested in the evaluation, can submit their views and ideas through an online platform.

For further information on the evaluation, please visit our website iphceval.com or email iphceval@allenandclarke.com.au to subscribe to these updates.