



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

Health Sector Co-Design Group (HSCG) Meeting 6 Communiqué 5-6 May 2021

The Department of Health has commissioned an evaluation of the Australian Government's investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care (PHC) systems through the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP). The evaluation is known as IAHP Yarnes, which stands for yarning, action, reflection, national evaluation and systems.

Following a six month pause to site partner engagement in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting in Canberra on 5-6 May 2021 was the first time the HSCG has met face-to-face since October 2019.

This meeting built on virtual meetings held over 2020, where the HSCG continued to support the IAHP Yarnes evaluation including:

- informing the finalisation of the Data Feasibility Assessment report including potential data sets
- providing feedback on the Year One Engagement Report and Summary
- agreeing to the timing and nature of the restart of site partner engagement following the evaluation pause period.

The HSCG members updated on the progress of the evaluation on the ground, and that 14 sites across Australia have been confirmed with a further three are expected. The HSCG acknowledged the work underway and the level of engagement from health sector evaluation partners since October 2020, while many were still responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated primary health care activities.

The HSCG members had a constructive discussion which provided direction and insight into the design and focus of upcoming evaluation activities including:

- a deep dive on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health system response to COVID-19
- the approach to analysis of quantitative data informed by an understanding of the availability of key data
- the structure and content of the interim evaluation report for the first evaluation cycle

During the meeting, the HSCG members provided direction into the potential approach to answering KEQ 5 - *How well are the methodological approaches used in the evaluation achieving its aims?* and agreed to further discuss the approach offline. The group heard from Dr Dawn Casey, Deputy CEO of National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) about her organisation's work on the development of a core services framework. It also heard from Dr Janine Mohamed, CEO of the Lowitja Institute, who presented on the Institute's work on Cultural Determinants of Health. HSCG members discussed how these pieces of work might interact with, and strengthen, the evaluation.

Membership

The HSCG members thanked outgoing member Dr Chris Bourke for his time on the co-design group and endorsed an invitation to Ms Sandy Gillies from West Queensland PHN (Primary Health Network) to provide a PHN perspective to the HSCG for the remainder of the evaluation.

Next steps

The HSCG membership expressed their continued commitment to the evaluation. They reiterated the importance of the evaluation team engaging with key site partners to build relationships to support the ongoing work of the evaluation.

The next face-to-face Co-design Meeting for the evaluation will be held in late October 2021.

Key resources

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No.1 Communiqué](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No.2 Communiqué](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No.3 Communiqué](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No. 4 Communiqué](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No. 5 Communiqué](#)

The evaluation website: www.iahpyarnes.com