



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

Health Sector Co-Design Group (HSCG) Meeting 8 Communiqué 3-4 May 2022

In 2018, after Ministerial approval of concept and co-design, the Department of Health commissioned a four-year evaluation of the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP). The evaluation is known as IAHP Yarnes, which stands for yarning, action, reflection, national evaluation, and systems.

Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this evaluation has been extended to five years. The end-date for fieldwork is June 2023.

Over the past 12 months, the HSCG has continued to support the IAHP Yarnes evaluation by:

- informing the selection criteria for collaborative topics
- providing feedback and guidance on the Cycle 1 Interim Evaluation Report
- informing the implementation of Cycle 2 fieldwork.

In 2021, Ms Thomann stood down from the role of HSCG Co-Chair. She received thanks for her significant contribution. At this meeting, the HSCG welcomed Ms Melinda Turner as the new HSCG Co-Chair. Ms Turner is a proud Aboriginal woman from Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community on the NSW South Coast. Ms Turner is the Assistant Secretary, Policy Partnerships and Performance Branch in the Australian Department of Health.

The HSCG also welcomed Dr Tomoko Sugiura as a new Department of Health representative. Dr Sugiura is the Director, Research, Data, and Performance Section.

The HSCG members were updated on the progress of the evaluation. Cycle 1 of the evaluation is complete. Seventeen sites have continued in the evaluation. The Yarnes team has conducted 125 yarns workshops and interviews with 380 participants across the site, state and territory, and national levels.

The HSCG members reflected on the updated policy landscape since the beginning of the evaluation. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-31 are two significant co-designed initiatives now supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policies and programs. The HSCG members noted that the evaluation findings should have regard to these and other substantial health reforms.

The HSCG members have sustained their commitment to co-design, encouraging responsive focus in Yarnes evaluation activities. HSCG supported a third cross-cutting collaborative to adapt and validate a tool to measure

institutional racism in Primary Health Networks in site locations. HSCG also supported an extension of the second cross-cutting collaborative to strengthen the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander health workers and practitioner's training pipeline in partnership with NATSIHWP.

This meeting was an opportunity for the Yarnes team to present high-level quantitative findings using publicly available health data to HSCG. HSCG members saw potential in additional quantitative analyses pertinent to answering the KEQs. HSCG members also supported the re-purposing of the original evaluation objective #4 in recognition of work now underway elsewhere in the Commonwealth Department of Health in conjunction with sector representatives.

The HSCG members recognised the challenge in implementing the evaluation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HSCG members and the evaluation team noted their appreciation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled primary health care sector for their engagement.

Next steps

The HSCG membership expressed their continued commitment to the evaluation, the benefits of sustained codesign and a strong interest in meeting more regularly over the remaining 14 months.

The next steps for the evaluation are to implement Cycle 2 in line with the original Monitoring and Evaluation Design Report which remains a key resource for this complex, long-term evaluation.

The next face-to-face HSCG Co-design meeting for the evaluation will be held in July 2022.

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](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No. 6 Communiqué](#)

The evaluation website: www.iahpyarnes.com