



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

Health Sector Co-Design Group (HSCG) Meeting 9 Communiqué 6 December 2022

In 2018, after Ministerial approval of concept and co-design, the Department of Health (now Department of Health and Aged Care) 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 evaluation is expected to be completed in June 2023.

In the last 6 months of 2022, the HSCG has continued to support the IAHP Yarnes evaluation by:

- informing the implementation of Cycle 3 fieldwork
- informing the selection of collaborative topics and the Yarnes final workstream
- providing feedback and guidance on the Cycle 2 Evaluation Report
- informing the design of the final evaluation report.

At its December 2022 meeting, the HSCG members were provided with an evaluation update, a summary of reporting timelines and the runway to the end of the evaluation in June 2023. The Department of Health and Aged Care also provided an update on the current IAHP policy and program landscape, including key policy changes being implemented by the Department.

The meeting was an opportunity for the evaluation team to present on the Cycle 3 site engagement and activity. Cycle 3 site visits and Collective Action for Change workshops were completed in December.

HSCG members were informed that:

- 437 people participated in Cycle 3 of the evaluation. 254 of these were community members.
- Community yarns were undertaken with specific populations such as young people and people recently released from prison.
- 40 site partners attended two Collective Action for Change workshops over Cycle 3. The workshops were an opportunity for site partners to connect with others, to share knowledge and support the development of the evaluation's recommendations.
 - One workshop explored partnerships, networks, and alliances; the why and how of these, their importance, and how they might best be supported.

- A second workshop looked at funding; the gap in funding, the health service mix gap, and the framing of principles for purchasing and funding.

The HSCG supported the development of a National Workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to:

- share the evaluation findings and sense check if they resonate with evaluation partners to inform further interpretation and explanation-building
- discuss the significance of the evaluation findings for the IAHP and broader policy settings and identify potential improvements and solutions to craft the evaluation's recommendations
- share and highlight promising practice in the design and delivery of PHC services to facilitate learning across evaluation partners.

The HSCG reviewed the timeline for engagement on the final report and agreed that they will provide their feedback on the final evaluation report in April 2023.

The remaining reports due to be completed over the next 6 months are as follows:

- The Health Needs Collaborative Report
- The PHC Data Environment Collaborative Report
- The Integrated Care Report
- The Final Evaluation Report (incl. recommendations)

The Department of Health and Aged Care provided several engaging presentations and updates connected to the IAHP, highlighting areas where the evaluation could add significant value. This included an update on the implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021-2031 and the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

The Health Plan is changing the way First Nations health and wellbeing policies and initiatives are developed, implemented, and reviewed, and the internal systems and procedures to ensure they are used in business operations. Since the release of the Health Plan in 2021, a grant program and budget initiatives have been developed.

A Steering Committee has been established to support delivery on the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms with its first meeting held on the 21 November 2022. Membership of the Steering Committee includes Deputy Secretaries and First Assistance Secretaries from across the Department of Health and Aged Care. The Department reinforced its strong focus and commitment in enacting and implementing these Priority Reforms. The initial focus for the Steering Committee is the development of a Partnership and Engagement Framework which will be implemented across the whole Department.

The HSCG members commended the Department on the approach taken to implementing the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, acknowledging the effort required and the leadership displayed in operationalising the reforms.

Next steps

The next steps for the evaluation are to report on the final two Collaboratives and to draft the Integrated Care Report and the Final Evaluation Report. The next face-to-face HSCG meeting for the evaluation will be held in April 2023.

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](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No. 7 Communiqué](#)

Health Sector Co-design Group [Meeting No. 8 Communiqué](#)

The evaluation website: www.iahpyarnes.com

