

***Directory of Indigenous-specific
Evaluations***

2001 - 2006

30 June 2006

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Introduction

The *Directory of Indigenous-specific Evaluations 2001-2006* has identified evaluations of Indigenous programs undertaken by Australian Government departments and key external evaluators. The directory captures any significant Indigenous-specific evaluations or mainstream evaluations with a prominent Indigenous component. The directory provides summaries of the evaluations, their scope, and their main findings.

In consultation with relevant government departments and agencies, the directory will be updated yearly and include evaluations for the preceding 5 years. This current directory dates back to 2001 and also includes planned evaluations.

The purpose of the directory is to provide readers with a ready reference to, and better understanding of, the evaluation work that has taken place on Indigenous programs and future evaluations.

The directory includes:

- formal evaluations;
- process evaluations;
- policy reviews; and
- performance audits.

The directory does not include:

- financial audits;
- evaluations of programs that receive less than \$2m annual funding; or
- unsubstantiated and/or anecdotal evaluations.

Over the longer term, the directory aims to provide an updated resource for Australian Government agencies and promote evaluations that target gaps in previous evaluation work.

Australian National Audit Office

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) independently audits public sector administrative performance and accountability regimes to measure efficiency and effectiveness, make recommendations for improvements and inform Parliament.

As a specialist public sector agency, the ANAO provides a full range of audit services to the Parliament, Australian Government public sector entities and statutory bodies, as well as government corporations.

The ANAO assists the Auditor-General to provide an independent view of the performance and financial management of public sector entities.

During 2001-2006 the ANAO conducted the following audits of Indigenous programs including:

1. Audit Report No. 1 2006-07: Administration of the Native Title Respondents Funding Scheme
2. Audit Report No. 43 2001-02: Indigenous Education Strategies
3. Implementation and Management of the Indigenous Employment Policy
4. Audit Report No. 15 2002-03: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program Follow Up Audit
5. Municipal Services for Indigenous Communities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
6. National Aboriginal Health Strategy Delivery of Housing and Infrastructure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Follow-up Audit
7. Audit Report No. 28 2002-03: Northern Territory Land Councils and the Aboriginals Benefit Account
8. Audit Report No. 48 2002-03: Indigenous Land Corporations – Operations and Performance Follow-up Audit
9. Audit Report No.13 2003–04: Performance Audit of ATSI Law and Justice Program

Details of these audits can be found under the relevant line agency listing.

Department of Finance and Administration – Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

The role of the Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) (OEA (IP)) is to support improvements in performance and public accountability of programs specifically designed to further the social, economic or cultural development of Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islanders.

This is achieved by conducting a regular program of independent, objective and systematic evaluations and audits of:

- relevant programs administered by Australian Government bodies;
- related aspects of the operations of Australian Government bodies delivering those programs;
- particular activities of organisations and individuals funded under those programs when requested by the Minister; and
- organisations and individuals where funding or loan agreement provides for evaluation or audit by OEA (IP) and where the Minister consents to the evaluation or audit.

Completed evaluations during 2001-2006 include:

1. Evaluation of the Legal and Preventative Services Program
2. Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Programme
3. National Arts and Crafts Industry Support
4. Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme – Away-from-Base for 'Mixed-mode' Delivery [IESIP-AFB]
5. An Effectiveness Audit of Maintenance and Protection of Indigenous Heritage
6. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
7. Croc Festivals
8. Evaluation of the Link Up Program
9. Evaluation of Aboriginal Hostels Limited
10. Indigenous Community Housing Organisations
11. Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Evaluation
12. Torres Strait Regional Authority
13. Evaluation: Putting the pieces together: Regional plans, data and outcomes
14. Outcome data measurement: Unfinished business

Details of these audits can be found under the relevant line agency listing.

Planned Evaluations and Performance Audits

Evaluations:

- *Family Violence Regional Activities Programme and Family Violence Partnership Programme*, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). To be completed in early 2007
- *Indigenous Business Australia*, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). To be completed in early 2007.
- *National Arts and Craft Industry Support Programme*, Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). To be completed in early 2007.
- *Indigenous Legal Aid Services*, Attorney General's Department (AGD). To commence in early 2007.

Performance audits:

- *Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Indigenous Communities (TAPRIC) - Community Phones Programme*, Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). To be completed in 2006.
- *Aboriginal Rental Housing Programme*, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). To be completed in 2006.
- *Community Development Employment Projects programme (CDEP) Organisations*, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). To be completed in 2006.
- *Community Development Employment Projects programme (CDEP) Performance Information*, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). To be completed in 2006.
- *Organisations Funded Under the Native Title Programme*, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). To be completed in 2007.
- *Indigenous Land Corporation*, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). To be completed in early 2007.
- *Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice Programme*. Attorney General's Department (AGD). To commence in November 2006.
- *Centrelink Agents*, Department of Human Services (DHS). To be completed in 2007.
- *Indigenous Small Business Fund*, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). To be completed in 2007.
- *Indigenous Coordination Centres*, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). To commence in early 2007.
- *Governance Audits*. To be completed in 2007.
- *Third Party Funding Agreements*. To commence in 2007.
- *Community Development Employment Projects programme*, Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

Note: The Work Program of the Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) can be amended at any time to meet emerging needs/issues.

Attorney-General's Department (AGD) – Completed Evaluations

Review of the Northern Territory Agreement

Year: 2002

Evaluator: Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the Northern Territory Government

Website: www.crimeprevention.gov.au

Terms of Reference:

This review occurred one year after the commencement of the Agreement between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments, to establish the Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Program and Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS).

The objectives of the review were to identify:

- key achievements in the first 12 months of the Agreement;
- the impact of the diversion scheme and the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS)
- barriers to access to the scheme, or best outcomes from the scheme, and strategies to address the barriers;
- short, medium and long-term data requirements for planning and policy development; and
- a basis on which to undertake the full evaluation of the Northern Territory Agreement in 2004.

Findings:

Findings indicated the Agreement was showing early signs of success. Monitoring throughout the reporting period (February to April 2002) showed that out of the 1,548 apprehension cases, 78% of juveniles were offered diversion and of these, some 75% did not re-offend. During this time there was a reduction in court appearances by juveniles of 31% for property offences and 51 % reduction in convictions overall. There was also a reduction of 40% in detention/imprisonment orders for juveniles for property offences.

The review also identified a range of issues needing attention including: more effective communication about the scheme to stakeholders and the community as a whole; appropriate access to legal advice for juveniles and their families, and adequate monitoring and reporting of various components of the scheme; access to language interpreters; the provision of effective support to juveniles and their families in the form of case management; and access to pre-court diversion for those living in remote Aboriginal communities without a permanent police presence. The need for Aboriginal community involvement in program development was also acknowledged.

Evaluation of the Legal and Preventative Services Program

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Website: <http://www.finance.gov.au/docs/LSPPrept.pdf>

Terms of Reference:

- To assess the outputs and outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS).
- To benchmark the cost of providing ATSILS against mainstream Legal Aid Commissions (LACs).
- To benchmark the standard of service provision of ATSILS against mainstream LACs
- To assess the equity of Legal and Preventative Services Programs (LPSP) to ATSILS
- Examine the progress of LPSP in prioritising funds to preventative and rehabilitative functions.

Findings:

ATSILS provide legal work at a significantly lower cost than that paid by mainstream LACs. There is no significant difference in client satisfaction between ATSIL and LAC clients; both have a high degree of client dissatisfaction. ATSIL practitioners suffer from low morale and high staff turnover. ATSIL clients and LAC Indigenous clients are more likely to plead guilty than mainstream offenders. This is partly explained by communication and contact problems with highly mobile clients in more remote communities, and generally limited time and resources. ATSILS represented 89% of Indigenous legal aid cases. There are more Indigenous staff in ATSILS (56%) than in LACs (2%). The majority of Indigenous prisoners (83%) did not have anyone present to support them when first interviewed by police.

While LACs are a 'supplementary provider' of legal services for Indigenous people, there is an under-count of the number of Indigenous clients they serve and there is 'considerable room for improvement'. Indigenous clients account for 6% of LAC cases. LAC practitioners are less likely to have received recent training in Indigenous cultural awareness. The data management system for ATSILS is still not functioning in NSW. Among ATSILS, there is a high level of dissatisfaction with the four areas of ASTIC reforms discussed in this evaluation. ASTIC needs to seriously address the high workloads, staff turnover, and low morale in ATSILS.

Evaluation of the Northern Territory Agreement

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Urbis Keys Young

Website: www.ag.gov.au

Terms of Reference:

The Agreement between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments concerns the establishment of the Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Program and Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS).

The evaluation aimed to:

- measure the effectiveness of the Agreement in diverting juveniles from the criminal justice system;
- measure the quality of all components of the Diversion Scheme;
- measure the effectiveness of the Agreement in alleviating language barriers;
- assess the NT Government's efforts in meeting the specifics of the Agreement and compliance with police general orders;
- assess the impact that the *Review of the Juvenile Justice Act* has had on the Agreement;
- identify any unintended outcomes of the Agreement, both positive and negative;
- identify short to long term data requirements for planning and policy development purposes for the future;
- identify problems or areas which require improvement and gaps in knowledge where further work is required; and
- make recommendations for improvement.

Findings:

The evaluation found that the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) has had a significant impact on enhancing access to services and promoting the well-being of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Benefits found of the AIS included: more effective representation from lawyers; Aboriginal people feeling much more comfortable in legal situations and more able to provide information and instructions; and increased access to appropriate medical care. Challenges for the service included: the pool of AIS interpreters is still insufficient to meet the needs of current users; quality of interpreters is variable; use of the AIS is still patchy across many government and non-government services; and AIS has yet to be recognised as a core part of all NT government service delivery. The report details a number of suggested strategies for strengthening the AIS and further increasing access of Aboriginal people to interpreters.

The evaluation demonstrated that the juvenile diversion scheme had a positive impact in reducing the number of young people coming before the courts. The majority of juveniles (78%) who completed diversion were not apprehended within 12 months of the initial apprehension, and the recidivism rate of this group is lower than that of juveniles who went to court. The number of juveniles appearing and convicted before the court dropped significantly in the first two years of the scheme and are still at a level significantly lower than the period before the diversion scheme was introduced.

Other benefits of the scheme found in the evaluation included: a positive impact on the lives of some young people, a high level of victim satisfaction, consistency in the application of diversionary measures and an enhanced perception of NT Police.

Challenges for the scheme include: it is working far less effectively with Indigenous than non-Indigenous juveniles; a number of attitudinal, operational, structural and other issues are impeding its effective operation; and there are variations in the approach, quality and range of case management services provided. The report details a number of suggested strategies to address these and other issues which are designed to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the juvenile diversion scheme.

Audit Report No. 1 2006-07: Administration of the Native Title Respondents Funding Scheme

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/A5B9F231104F047ECA2571D40071A6D6/\\$file/Audit%20Report%201.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/A5B9F231104F047ECA2571D40071A6D6/$file/Audit%20Report%201.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the Attorney General Department's (AGD) administration of grants provided under the Respondents Scheme. The audit considered the context within which the Respondents Scheme operates and focused on assessing the administration of the scheme including its financial management within AGD.

Findings:

Comprehensive recommendations were made regarding the Native Title Respondents Funding Scheme. ANOA has recommended that AGD improve its management of the scheme. Specific recommendations were made in relation to performance management, risk management, effective and efficient use of Government resources, data management, decision making tools, and financial management. AGD has agreed to all of these recommendations.

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Programme

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs), Department of Finance and Administration

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) provide holistic assistance in the form of legal services, information, counselling, referral and practical support for victims of family violence. They may also undertake preventative initiatives, such as community education and programmes for children and youth.

Terms of Reference:

The objective of the audit is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the FVPLS programme and the FVPLS units in delivering services including:

- Assessing the actual extent of the implementation of the recommendations contained in an OEA Report issued in April 2004; and
- Reviewing the process for determining the location of the additional 13 FVPLS units.

Findings

The audit noted the following:

- All four FVPLS units visited were achieving the desired outcomes to varying degrees;
- Two FVPLS units were achieving very good outcomes in the community and their services were being marketed well through initiatives;
- One FVPLS unit required increased awareness and acceptance by the community it is intended to service, together with improved administrative operations; and
- The remaining FVPLS unit had moved from an unsatisfactory auspicing arrangement to incorporation from 1 July 2005 and was demonstrating positive improvement.

There is also a need to aggregate the 26 FVPLS Quarterly Performance Reports into a National Consolidated Quarterly Performance Report which will enable the Programme Manager to effectively monitor and manage the programme in accordance with the yearly funding outcomes targets and the Operational Framework priorities.

Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) – Completed Evaluations

Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program (ISRP)

Year: 2005-06

Evaluator: Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Findings:

In 2005–06, an internal review of the program indicated strong stakeholder support for ISRP initiatives including the employment of Indigenous Sport Development Officers (ISDOs) which work with Indigenous communities and relevant government agencies to promote sport and physical recreation activity at the regional and local level. However, the review found that some improvements could be made. In particular, the 2006-07 guidelines for the annual submission base funding have been amended to reflect a stronger focus on family and services to Indigenous people. Greater stability of funding for the employment of ISDOs is also being provided by entering into multi-year agreements.

Community Phones Program – Telecommunications Action Plan for Remote Aboriginal Communities

Year: 2005-06

Evaluator: Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Terms of reference

This evaluation is considering the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and community based maintenance arrangements of the Community Phones Trial in meeting the telecommunications needs of remote Indigenous communities against the funding provided.

Findings

An evaluation of the Community Phones Program is currently being undertaken. Stage 1 of the evaluation was conducted in March-April 2006, and Stage 2 of the evaluation is to be conducted in September-November 2006 with a report due at the end of December 2006.

Regional Arts and Culture Support Program

Year: 2005-06

Evaluator: Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation examined the match between outcomes and program objectives. The results of the evaluation have been the basis for program improvement for the 2006-07 funding round and review of program guidelines exercise.

Findings:

The Regional Arts and Culture Support evaluation investigated, reported and made recommendations on:

- whether or not the program is achieving its objectives in the most efficient and effective way; and
- the scope for improving the performance of the program.

A draft report has been prepared but is yet to be finalised.

Planned Evaluations

Maintenance of Indigenous Language and Records Program

Year: 2006-07

Evaluator: Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Terms of Reference:

The review of the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) Program is to evaluate the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of the program. The broad objective of MILR is to support the revival and maintenance of Indigenous languages as living systems of knowledge shared by communities and passed down from generation to generation. The review currently consists of three elements:

1. To investigate the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation in the MILR Program.
2. To explore options for MILR Program improvement including reference to the continued relevance and priority of Program objectives in light of current circumstances and changes in Government policy
3. To assess the degree and extent of MILR Program accountability in the context of best practice grant administration

National Arts and Crafts Industry Support

Year: 2006-07

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) in consultation with the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA)

Terms of Reference:

An evaluation will examine progress in achieving the objectives of the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) program, including the effectiveness of the program in building stronger Indigenous art centres and a more sustainable Indigenous arts industry. The evaluation will also assess the efficiency with which the outputs and outcomes of the NACIS program are achieved.

The detailed scope/terms of reference for the evaluation will be determined as part of the individual evaluation planning process in consultation with DCITA. The methodology for the evaluation will include desktop research, stakeholder interviews and surveys. It is envisaged that the evaluation will be completed in April 2007.

Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) – Completed Evaluations

Audit Report No. 43 2001-02: Indigenous Education Strategies

Year: 2001

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256B9F0016CD95/\\$file/Audit%20Report%2043.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256B9F0016CD95/$file/Audit%20Report%2043.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

To improve educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians, two main forms of assistance administered by the Commonwealth, namely the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) and the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance programmes (IEDA), are currently available. The objective of the audit was to assess whether the department had efficiently and effectively managed the development and implementation of the IESIP agreements for the 2001 to 2004 quadrennium.

Findings:

The department had in place the types of plans that would normally be expected to be used for the implementation of new IESIP agreements for the 2001 to 2004 quadrennium. However, the timetable for implementation was not met, with many agreements with major providers being signed some six months into the 2001 school year. Ultimately, all IESIP agreements were entered into during 2001, with the final agreement being signed in October 2001.

Evaluation of the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Hugh Watson consulting

Website: http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/B5D48510-1EEA-4C31-82A8-1A26618818A7/1490/NIELNS_final_report.pdf

Summary

The National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS) was the subject of an evaluation during 2002 and 2003. The evaluation team assessed provider reports, talked to key stakeholders and conducted a series of case studies. The evaluation concluded that 75% of projects, representing 75% of total funding, had either achieved their targets or made an improvement on their baseline.

The stated objective of the NIELNS was 'to achieve English literacy and numeracy for Indigenous students at levels comparable to those achieved by other young Australians' (evaluation report page 5). However, the evaluators accepted the contention that 'the NIELNS program is more a readiness for learning program than a literacy and numeracy program. Only strategies under elements 3 (preschool experiences) and 5 (using best teaching methods) of the 6 elements of the strategy were cited as having achieved actual literacy and numeracy outcomes 'in a number of cases'. One element (measuring accountability) contributed to intermediate outcomes only. Others contributed chiefly or solely to 'readiness to learn' outcomes such as improved attendance, and health problems being addressed by the start of school.

Generally, as would be expected, there were better results for ongoing initiatives with origins predating NIELNS. Improvements were greatest (94%) in the preschool sector, less (70%) in the school sector and lowest in the VET sector (just over 40%) which may indicate a priority for early intervention.

The 2003 National Report to Parliament noted:

'The added value of NIELNS can be seen in two ways; through the improving results of projects over time and through the activities and outcomes that would not have occurred without the programme. The great majority of initiatives were achieving results that contributed to the intended outcomes of NIELNS'.

Breaks in the Road – Evaluation of the Indigenous Youth Partnership Initiative

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Powers and Associates

Website:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/publications_resources/profiles/breaks_in_the_road_final_report.htm

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation team was asked to investigate ‘the contribution of the Indigenous Youth Partnership Initiative (IYPI) projects to the improvement of Indigenous young people’s literacy and numeracy’ and ‘the contribution of the projects to increasing Indigenous young people’s enterprise and employability skills’.

Findings:

The assessment of IYPI strategies is that career education is an important part of the development of employability skills. According to the report, the IYPI projects have generally had a beneficial influence on the literacy, numeracy and employability of their Indigenous participants. Compared with the IYPI projects servicing metropolitan and regional centres, evaluators observed a number of significant constraints adversely affecting projects operating in remote communities.

The report considered Vocational Education Programs and coordinating structured work experience. It stated such programs need to be factored into future initiatives in remote regions. However, it was realized that over the long term a whole of government approach would further integrate the projects into the community. The desired approach was described as a ‘holistic, community driven approach that is well resourced, well coordinated and focuses on the big picture of supporting Indigenous youth transitions to adulthood and independence’.

The report stated that, ‘in general, the projects were successful in these endeavours’ and have confirmed the currency of many of the findings of the 1998 Report of the DEETYA Taskforce on School to Work Transition for Indigenous Australians.

Review of ATAS Bulk Funding Arrangements to Higher Education and Boarding Schools

Year: 2003

Evaluator: The Indigenous and Transitions Group, Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)

Website: http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/5EF1884B-627F-4A51-A982-B5477AEAF021/2494/ATAS_Draft_Review_Report_0107.pdf

Terms of Reference:

Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) Bulk Funding Arrangements to Higher Education and Boarding Schools are funded under the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance program.

The report focused on:

- developing a performance framework to move to an outcomes focus, with links to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP);
- examining funding levels and formulae allocations;
- ascertaining whether the National Office of DEST is best placed to deliver ATAS bulk funding, or whether it should be devolved to the department's Indigenous Education Unit network; and
- identifying examples of best practice which can be used to promote bulk-funded ATAS.

Findings:

The review concluded the current performance reporting framework is largely output-focussed. Generally, no information is provided on the longer term impact of tutoring beyond the final examination result for the subject which the student received tutoring in. From examining the end of semester and end of year performance reports provided by institutions, it appears that students who receive ATAS tutoring do improve their achievement levels for the subjects they are tutored in.

However, it is not possible to determine whether the funds are targeting or reaching those students most in need. The bulk-funding arrangements recognise that a student's educational institution is best placed to determine, monitor and respond to a student's educational needs. It is nonetheless not possible to determine if the ATAS tutoring is making a longer term difference by increasing the number of students who complete award level courses.

The review further concluded that institutions which deliver education into remote locations face additional costs and diverse circumstances which may make it more difficult to achieve educational outcomes, and recommended that consideration should be given to moving the funded institutions to a funding system linked to performance targets. This would allow sufficient flexibility for those institutions operating in remote locations, while not disadvantaging other institutions.

Review of the Independent Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Providers

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Department of Education, Science and Training

Website: http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/28190E9B-DD5D-4971-91CD-B6FB67C71A47/2500/IIVETS_summary_report_2003.pdf

Summary

In November 2002, the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) called for a review of four Independent Indigenous Vocational Education and Training (IIVET) institutes which receive funding from the department, under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP). The review examined funding for the independent Indigenous vocational education and training providers, the services they provide, how service provision might be improved, and compared the outcomes of this sector with the vocational education and training sector as a whole. The consultants who carried out the review are not identified.

The review found evidence that Independent Aboriginal VET providers are making a contribution to Indigenous training in Australia at a time when Indigenous training outcomes still lag behind those of other Australians. Indigenous controlled VET providers had literacy and numeracy completion rates, of 76.5% and 73% respectively, which were higher than other non-government providers and much higher than government providers. These results were well above the national average of 56.5% and 54.4% respectively - and indeed above non-Indigenous rates of 71.6% and 62.9%. Module completion rates were highest in Indigenous controlled institutes. However, the review noted that there appears to be little formal testing of literacy and numeracy at the beginning of courses. This carries a risk of graduates being restricted in their opportunities because specific needs have not been identified and addressed before formal coursework begins.

The consultants noted that IIVETS are characterised by some role ambiguity, in that the histories, cultures and community structures of the IIVETS mean that there are conflicting demands on them to be both cultural centres and educators in mainstream vocational training. They recommended that a clear and agreed set of Commonwealth/State guidelines would assist administrators and simplify accountability and performance planning for IIVETS. This appears to relate to the finding that although funding is provided through VET programs there is some dissonance between VET measures and MCEETYA measures for IIVET performance. This can make it difficult for state VET administrators to reconcile performance expectations and for IIVETS to justify performance to state departments.

Review of Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies and Indigenous Support Units

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Northern Territory University

Website: http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/D095F617-A492-46E4-B1F3-EB1ED4EBFBFB/2516/iecb_NTU_report.pdf

Terms of Reference:

The review was undertaken by Professor Mary Ann Bin-Sallik and Ms Sonia Smallacomb from the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education, Northern Territory University. It is the first review of the structure, operations and funding of seven Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) and three Indigenous Support Units (ISUs).

The review examined ways in which:

- IECBs and ISUs could be more effective in the provision of policy advice to the Commonwealth Government;
- IECBs and ISUs could facilitate more useful consultation with Indigenous communities on key educational issues;
- funding could be distributed in a more effective way across IECBs and ISUs; and
- the ISUs could make a greater contribution to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous students.

Findings:

The review concluded that IECBs and ISUs are important because of their contributions to Indigenous education. However, the current arrangements and structures do not adequately address the major education policy issues in the States and Territories, and there is potential for the Commonwealth to receive far more useful information than is currently provided in response to the funding agreements with DEST.

The evaluator considered that ‘in general, the Commonwealth is not getting value for money [from IECBs and ISUs] because there is no advice from the IECBs or ISUs at the Commonwealth level... there are a number of reasons why this is occurring, one of the main reasons being that there is no formalized strategy in place for IECBs to meet directly with the Minister [for Education, Science and Training.]’

Review of the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Program – Final Report

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Department of Education, Science and Training

Website:

http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/indigenous/publications/ieda/2004_review/IEDA_review_final_report.pdf

Terms of Reference

The Phase 2 Review of the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance (IEDA) program was conducted between September 2002 and December 2003.

The purpose of this review was to:

- identify ways of improving the appropriateness and effectiveness of the IEDA program;
- develop a performance framework that will measure educational outcomes of the IEDA program;
- review the legal, fraud and audit compliance issues for each policy and program element of IEDA with the view to developing better outcomes;
- identify examples of good practice that can be utilised in the delivery of any proposed policy direction; and
- ascertain timelines and strategies for the implementation of any changes to the IEDA program in 2004.

Findings

Since IEDA commenced in 1991, a main focus has been The Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS). ATAS provides individual tuition, small group tuition, homework centres and tuition during school hours. The report suggests early tutorial assistance for Indigenous children will help them achieve literacy and numeracy benchmarks at years 3 and 5. There has been some improvement, but there is still a large gap in achievement across reading, writing and numeracy for Indigenous students compared to all students.

The report provides evidence that ATAS tutoring has contributed to some improvements in literacy and numeracy in the early years. However, there is no significant national data for literacy and numeracy outcomes after Year 7. Another program provided under IEDA is the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA). The report concluded that although the program had been effective in increasing the involvement of Indigenous parents in school, there was little evidence that it had been successful in influencing school decisions and improving educational outcomes.

Some recommendations to improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of the IEDA program included: the provision of strategic interventions that complement mainstream education programs and services; strategies to develop and fund more strategic initiatives to improve educational outcomes of Indigenous students; and to be more innovative and creative in their approach to such initiatives. It was recommended that a performance reporting framework be developed to assess the impact of IEDA on student learning outcomes. An overarching evaluation strategy be developed to collect additional qualitative and quantitative data. Another recommendation was that staff be trained appropriately and have more focus on learning outcomes as opposed to outputs. In a policy initiative, IEDA should encourage community capacity building strategies that recognise and build on the strengths of parents, ATAS tutors and communities. Finally, a risk assessment should be undertaken as part of the implementation strategy and reassessed each six months.

Murdi Paaki COAG Trial Site Evaluation

Year: 2005

Evaluator: Urbis JHD Pty Ltd

Terms of Reference:

The aim of the project was to examine the perceptions that Indigenous communities have of linkages and relationships between community governance and government and non-government agencies since the Murdi Paaki COAG trial commenced in April 2002.

Findings:

To be released in 2006-07.

Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme – Away-from-Base for ‘Mixed-mode’ Delivery [IESIP-AFB]

Year: 2006 (report due in November 2006)

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs) Department
of Finance and Administration

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

- The aim of the IESIP-AFB programme is to promote access to tertiary education for Indigenous people living in regional and remote areas. It is administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).
- The ‘mixed-mode’ courses are delivered through a combination of distance education and residential blocks on campus; reverse blocks where teachers conduct lectures and tutorials in regional centres or in students’ home communities; and vocational placements.
- Before year 2001 it was funded under ABSTUDY and was based on individual student applications.

Terms of Reference:

The terms of the reference for the evaluation were:

- Assess the effectiveness of the current funding measures in meeting the needs of students enrolled in ‘mixed-mode’ courses with reference to the effectiveness of the IESIP-AFB programme on improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students; and
- Examine the compliance of education providers with 2001-04 IESIP-AFB accountability mechanisms and guidelines.

Findings:

To be advised.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) – Completed Evaluations

Indigenous Employment Policy Evaluation (Stage 1)

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Evaluation and Programme Performance Branch (DEWR)

Website:

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/SchemesInitiatives/IndigenousProgs/IndigenousEmploymentPolicyevaluation-stageone.htm>

Terms of reference:

At the time the Indigenous Employment Policy was announced, the Government made a commitment to a full evaluation of the Indigenous Employment Programme (IEP). Recognising that it would take several years for the program to mature, the evaluation strategy adopted a two-stage evaluation process. This first stage report presents an overall assessment of implementation and early experience of the IEP and its interaction with the mainstream employment services delivered through Job Network. A second stage report is expected to focus more closely on performance once policy settings have had time to mature.

Findings:

Progress during the first two years of the IEP has laid solid ground for future developments. While the first year was affected by implementation and transition issues, the second year shows encouraging signs of growth in participation and job outcomes. Commencements in the second year averaged 7 000 per annum, reaching the levels achieved by the previous specialised Training for Aboriginals Programme (TAP). The flexibility of the IEP together with a clear focus on employment outcomes, rather than training in isolation, has delivered employment opportunities at a lower cost than under TAP.

Early performance in achieving the policy objectives is promising, but further refinements are needed. Participation by private sector employers has increased and the employment prospects of Indigenous job seekers appear to have been improved by participation, though it is too early to measure the precise impact the program has had. Although it is increasingly pro-active in dealing with this group, use of Wage Assistance by Job Network appears low. The evaluation findings point to several areas which require attention including school-to-work transition, support to keep people in jobs and wider private sector participation. Ongoing population growth means it is important to sustain and build on early progress, particularly given low school retention rates and the geographic dispersion of the population, which affects access to private sector employment.

Implementation and Management of the Indigenous Employment Policy

Year: 2003

Evaluator: The Auditor-General, Audit Report No.47 2002–03

Website:

<http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/66678C03FB5883C8CA256D410079E4B7>

Summary

The Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO) audit of the department's implementation and management of the Indigenous Employment Policy was tabled in Parliament in June 2003. It found the department had implemented all elements of the policy in a changing and challenging environment and that ongoing management was effective. The audit noted the department had been responsive to emerging Indigenous employment issues and had implemented a number of enhancements since the policy's introduction to improve take-up and effectiveness.

Indigenous Employment Policy Evaluation (Stage 2)

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Evaluation and Programme Performance Branch (DEWR)

Website:

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/SchemesInitiatives/IndigenousProgs/IndigenousEmploymentPolicyevaluation-stagetwo.htm>

Summary:

The Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP) appears to be meeting its primary objective of improving the employment prospects of Indigenous Australians, particularly in the private sector. Outcomes for Indigenous job seekers increased during the second Job Network contract and the implementation of Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs) under Australians Working Together has begun to help participants in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) move into open employment.

About one in ten IEP participants benefit from assistance (a strong result by international standards). The IEP appears more effective in regional locations, although participation is lower than in urban locations. Together, Intensive Assistance, Wage Assistance, Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) and the Corporate Leaders' initiative appear to have been responsible for between 2400 and 4300 new jobs for Indigenous job seekers per annum, most of these jobs being in the private sector. However, caution should be exercised in interpretation of the estimates of additional jobs. Jobs may not be sustained over time, and it is unclear if people are assisted more than once or whether assistance leads to the displacement of other unsubsidised Indigenous workers.

Other benefits of the IEP to job seekers include improving income levels, encouraging independence from income support and opening-up job opportunities which may not have otherwise been available to less job-ready job seekers.

If the IEP is to continue to be effective it will need to focus on helping those Indigenous people who are relatively more highly disadvantaged. Getting and keeping jobs for people who are less skilled and less job-ready requires considerable commitment and innovation from Job Network members, employers and other labour market intermediaries. Program improvements are also needed in several areas to respond to the significant barriers faced by Indigenous people. These improvements include:

- building on good practice developed by high performing providers in the second Job Network contract, promoting innovation and proactive forms of support that help retain Indigenous people in jobs;
- improving recruitment into STEP projects, particularly through IECs and high quality mentoring programs which improve take-up and retention, and assist employers;
- encouraging new employers to participate in the IEP and providing a significant level of guidance to these employers through STEP and the Corporate Leaders initiative;
- improving the impact of STEP, particularly by encouraging repeat sponsors to assist less skilled Indigenous job seekers and to sustain and improve their ongoing retention of Indigenous workers; and
- improving the quality, extent and availability of administrative data which describes STEP participants, CDEP participation and also underemployed or discouraged Indigenous workers in ABS collections.

A major challenge to improving overall effectiveness is a rapidly growing Indigenous population, projected to grow between 8% and 23% between 2002 and 2006. The years ahead will see a significant inflow of predominantly young people into the labour force. The continued success of the IEP requires a strong focus on helping younger job seekers.

The Role of Community Development Employment Projects in Rural and Remote Communities

Year: 2004

Evaluator: National Centre for Vocational Education Research

Website: <http://www.ncver.edu.au/vetcontext/publications/1505.html>

Terms of Reference:

The study aims to describe the role of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme in rural and remote communities in Australia and to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme. It describes the major needs of such communities (as identified by elected representatives), and how the schemes have attempted to meet those needs.

Findings:

The main performance measures established for the scheme by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in the 2002/2003 period were met at varying levels of achievement. Training was an important component of the program and the target of 75% participation reported training had been provided for participants in a number of diverse sectors.

As at August 2003, there were 35,089 participants in CDEP, of which 92.7% were Indigenous. Skills development included on the job training and experience and participants also undertook formal training. Key outcomes included improved community infrastructure and access to services. Almost 750 activities undertaken through the CDEP scheme were related to the provision of municipal services, and community infrastructure and support. Moreover, this scheme is also a provider of essential services, especially in remote areas, including local and state and territory government services.

The scheme is also expected to contribute to Indigenous economic development through the development of commercial activities and the provision of scheme labour to other Indigenous businesses. For example, in 2002/2003 the scheme included 760 activities involving business development and assistance, far exceeding its target of 46 such activities that year. However, the report states that it is difficult to estimate the proportion of participants who move into external work. The CDEP scheme also enabled over a third of participants to increase their wages by being involved in contracts with local district councils, or part-time work with other employers.

The effectiveness of the program is challenged by the identification of suitable projects and the importance of training for those to have suitable skills and knowledge to help improve their own economic situation or that of their communities. Whilst the CDEP cannot be expected to solve the problems of poor initial education it can help in some ways to improve access to education and training by providing the encouragement and financial support which enable them to engage in and complete formal qualifications.

Evaluation of Australians Working Together

Year: 2005

Evaluator: Department of Employment Workplace Relations

Website:

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/Publications/ProgrammeEvaluation.htm>

Terms of Reference

The Government announced the *Australians Working Together* (AWT) package in the 2001-02 Commonwealth Budget. The package had the following overarching objectives:

- increasing self-reliance through economic participation (principally through paid employment) and social participation (which can assist transition to economic participation);
- generating opportunities and supporting economic and social participation through governments, communities and businesses working together; and
- building a social safety net that is more responsive to individual circumstances.

The purpose of the evaluation of Australians Working Together was to assess, as far as possible, whether the package of measures and initiatives was effective in meeting its objectives of increasing participation and decreasing income support reliance among working age income support recipients. Four key target groups were identified in the evaluation: Indigenous Australians; mature age job seekers; parents with children; and people with disabilities.

Findings

Evaluation reports are available on the website. *The Australians Working Together Report, October 2005* showed that the initiative was an important first step towards increasing participation of the working age income support population and highlighted the potential gains that could be achieved by new participation requirements. It also pointed to the benefits of establishing closer links between Indigenous job seekers and mainstream non-Indigenous employment services. The report shows that gains could be made in reducing Indigenous unemployment by encouraging Indigenous job seekers to participate more fully in the job market. The positive response to the AWT initiative among Indigenous communities helped set the scene for the Government's reforms to the Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP) program, which were introduced in early 2005, along with other reform measures.

Review of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program

Year: 2005

Evaluator: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

In February 2005 the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations released *Building on Success - CDEP Discussion Paper 2005* as part of a national consultation process about the broad future directions for the CDEP program. The paper set out possible improvements to CDEP to help raise the living standards of Indigenous Australians and provide more non-CDEP jobs, relevant community activities and business development opportunities. The proposals in the paper gave individuals, organisations and communities an opportunity to contribute to strengthening CDEP into the future.

The *Building on Success CDEP - Future Directions* paper summarised the wide-ranging feedback received from over 2100 people who attended consultation sessions, and through over 100 submissions, and announced the government's response to the consultation process. The response focused on CDEP as a stepping stone to improved economic independence.

Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) – Planned Evaluations

An Effectiveness Audit of Maintenance and Protection of Indigenous Heritage

Year: 2007

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Summary

The Department of Environment and Heritage has had a long association with the protection of Indigenous heritage. It is responsible for the administration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (the Heritage Protection Act). The purposes of the Heritage Protection Act are the preservation and protection from injury or desecration of areas and objects in Australia and in Australian waters that are of particular significance to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. The Heritage Protection Act provides the opportunity for Aboriginal people to seek protection for areas and objects that are of particular significance in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, where these are under threat of injury or desecration.

The department also administers a wide range of programs relevant to the protection of Indigenous heritage and culture including the Cultural Heritage Program, the Marine Protected Areas Program and the Indigenous Protected Areas Program. The Director of National Parks also has responsibility for the protection of Indigenous heritage. In addition, each State and Territory administers Indigenous heritage protection legislation and operates programs tailored to that legislation.

Grants have been provided to Indigenous community organisations to support local heritage preservation and management projects. Projects such as library and information services and support and outreach programs for Aboriginal cultural centres have also been funded at the State/Territory level or national level.

The objective of the audit would be to assess the effectiveness of the department, including the Director of National Parks, in protecting Indigenous heritage under its various programs. The audit scope would include the administration of the Heritage Protection Act, cooperation and coordination within the department, and between the various Australian and state and territory government agencies, and the administration of grants to Indigenous community and national and state organisations.

Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) – Completed Evaluations

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-ordinated Care Trials, National Evaluation Summary

Year: 2001

Evaluator: KPMG Consulting

Website: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-coord.htm>

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation outlines the background, description, participant experiences and outcomes of the four Coordinated Care Trials conducted in Aboriginal communities between 1997 and 1999. The trials were located in Katherine (NT), the Tiwi Islands (NT), Wilcannia (NSW) and Perth/Bunbury (WA). The principal aim of the trial process was to test alternative financing arrangements and through this, improve the quality of care for those with a diverse range of health care needs. The Indigenous trials included catchment populations characterised by either individual enrolment of clients, families or a whole of population approach.

Findings:

The report states that there has been significant progress in improving access to services, health care planning and population health programs that address priority needs at the community level. 'The success of the trials is evidence of the progress that can be made in improving Aboriginal health when governments, local communities and health services and organisations work together in partnership. '

Cited positive outcomes of the trial included enhanced access to services (attributed primarily to more flexible funding); services becoming more appropriate; significant progress in the development and implementation of organisational structures and processes necessary to the coordinated care model; confirmation of the value of funds pooling; improved individual empowerment; and greater understanding of the importance of community empowerment. More specific outcomes claimed included progress in identifying client need, establishing care plans, and establishing population health initiatives'. However, there was insufficient quantitative information to assess the impact that care planning has had on service delivery.

Although the primary aim of the trials was to improve the health status of individuals and communities, it was not expected that quantifiable improvements in health status would be achieved over the trial period. This was partly due to the short duration of the trials and partly because of the broader context of Aboriginal health.

Evaluation of the Emotional and Social Well Being (Mental Health) Action Plan

Year: 2001

Evaluator: Urbis Keys Young

Website: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-eswbap.htm>

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation aimed to provide:

- a description of what has happened under the action plan particularly in relation to:
 - improving access to culturally appropriate high quality health care for emotional and social well being
 - improving mental health outcomes
 - addressing issues affecting youth suicide
 - enhancing the appropriateness and effectiveness of mainstream and specific mental health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- an assessment of the progress that has been made including identification of factors which have assisted or hindered progress in the implementation of the action plan, recognising the importance of basic steps undertaken in areas such as intersect rial collaboration and capacity building;
- a description of approaches which have worked well;
- suggestions as to which components of the action plan could appropriately be applied more broadly; and
- suggestions for additional strategies which might be used to provide sustainable and culturally appropriate emotional and social well being services.

Findings:

The report noted that a good deal of activity had been undertaken in the area of social and emotional wellbeing over the previous four years. A particular success of the action plan had been in the area of curriculum development. There are now 15-20 curricula with significant community input and control. However, only a limited number of courses had been fully implemented. According to the report, communication to enhance understanding of emotional and social well being in Indigenous communities appears to have been at least moderately successful.

Communication measures were put in place to enhance understanding of emotional and social well being in Indigenous communities. However, because the field of emotional and social well being is largely still in the capacity- building stage of development, the report noted that it is premature to determine whether the emotional and social well being of Indigenous individuals and communities has improved. It concluded that the core direction of the action plan had demonstrated effectiveness and offered the promise, in the long run, of improving the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples.

The evaluation proposed that the action plan be re-written and developed as a framework document which would serve as a focus for future direction. The department has since published such a framework document: *A National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well Being 2004-2009*. The framework was endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, and has strong links to the *National Mental Health Plan 2003-2008*.

Audit Report No. 15 2002-03: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program Follow Up Audit

Year: 2002

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/23817F9E309B2FB54A256C6100254991/\\$file/Audit%20Report%2015.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/23817F9E309B2FB54A256C6100254991/$file/Audit%20Report%2015.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The audit reviewed the extent to which the Department of Health and Ageing (Health) had implemented the recommendations of Audit Report No. 13 of 1998-1999, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program, taking account of any changed circumstances or new administrative issues identified as impacting the implementation of these recommendations.

Findings:

The Department of Health and Ageing's (Health) progress against the implementation of recommendations from the 1998 audit were deemed implemented, partially implemented or not implemented. Of the 12 recommendations from the 1998 audit, Health has implemented eight, partially implemented one, and not implemented three recommendations.

Review of the Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Program

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Centre for Remote Health

Website: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-eyehealth.htm>

Terms of Reference:

The review focused on the implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Program including:

- an examination of the extent of the implementation of the program and the effectiveness and efficiency of the key elements of the program;
- options for strengthening the program's integration with primary health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- identifying how the program articulates with mainstream eye health programs and services, and how such relationships could be strengthened;
- how to improve Indigenous Australians access to primary eye health care and specialists;
- models of service delivery where there have been demonstrated improvements in access to services, eye health care and in eye health outcomes; and
- identifying mechanisms to improve data available to report on program progress.

Findings:

The review identified the need for the program to be more strongly integrated into primary health care, and for eye health to be addressed across the whole of the health system, including mainstream programs and services. It outlined twenty-four recommendations, including:

- eye health must be addressed as a component of comprehensive primary health care;
- mainstream programs and services, including specialist services, have the same responsibility to address the health needs of Indigenous Australians as other Australians and at all levels of the health system;
- regional approaches to eye health will, over time, place more emphasis on strengthening the capacity of local primary health care services in an organised approach to chronic disease detection and management;
- trachoma control in endemic regions requires a public health response with the involvement of public health units, primary health care services, and housing and essential services;
- existing capacity in eye health in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care setting must be preserved; and
- program development and implementation should be based on the best available evidence.

The Australian Government supports the majority of the review recommendations. It also acknowledges the need for stronger integration of the program into primary health care while ensuring that mainstream services make an appropriate contribution to improving eye health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Review of the Australian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Program

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Various (see 7 volumes below)

Website: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm>

Background:

In 2003, a series of papers were commissioned to provide information, analysis and advice to government as a part of a Review of the Australian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Program. The review examined issues relating to funding for comprehensive primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the impact of activity in this area. The commissioned material complemented information obtained from previous reviews and evaluations, as well as that obtained from program data.

Volume 1. National Strategies for Improving Indigenous Health and Health Care

Authors: Judith Dwyer, Kate Silburn and Gai Wilson, La Trobe University (overall program assessment)

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/1national.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/1national.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The authors were required to provide an assessment of the level and impact of current funding and health care provision for Indigenous Australians; a strategy for improving the effectiveness of health care for Indigenous people; and advice regarding performance indicators against which to monitor the effectiveness of Australian Government investment in Indigenous health care.

Findings:

The report concluded that government commitment to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage requires that policy and funding decisions be based on two criteria: the potential to provide equitable access to effective health care; and the potential for improvement in Indigenous health. Good progress has been made in recent years in the development of the service delivery system and system infrastructure, both mainstream and Indigenous-specific. Current access to, and investment in, Indigenous primary health care is too low, though the existing level is producing some positive health impacts and outcomes. Investment in comprehensive primary health care should be increased to a level between three and six times the national average per capita expenditure.

Funding should be allocated through both Indigenous-specific and mainstream funding programs, and to both Indigenous-specific and mainstream providers. The principle of community control of planning, management and delivery of Indigenous primary health care services should be maintained, in accordance with the National Strategic Framework. Community participation in partnerships and other forms of collaboration with mainstream health care agencies is also needed.

The Primary Health Care Access Program should continue to be used as the major vehicle for additional funding and for the development of effective partnerships and plans. Urban Indigenous-specific agencies should continue to be supported, in light of the needs of urban Indigenous Australians, and in recognition of the roles these agencies play in developing the capacity of the mainstream health system. Indigenous health care should continue to be funded and administered as part of the health portfolio. Outcomes and impacts of increased funding should be monitored through the National Performance Framework currently under development. Sustained monitoring of a small number of valid indicators, focused on those conditions and targets that are sensitive to improvements in primary health care, and supported by robust data collection and analysis, are needed.

Volume 2. Investment Analysis of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Program in the Northern Territory

Authors: Carol Beaver, Centre for Chronic Disease, University of Queensland and Yuejen Zhao, Health Gains Planning Unit, Department of Health and Community Services, Northern Territory

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/2investment.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/2investment.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

This report was commissioned to assess the cost-effectiveness of current services provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Northern Territory.

Findings:

The report found that investments in primary health care result in prevention of complex diseases/disorders and hospital admissions. However, the report highlighted that after extrapolating the potential impact of the current investment in primary health care, projected funding allocations will not be able to cater for treatment of the growing burden of chronic disease in the Indigenous population. The report found that if funding was not provided, the estimated total health costs on other parts of the system would be higher. This would exceed \$136 million over five years after funding was no longer provided, \$470 million in 10 years, and \$1,261 million over 20 years (which is largely expected to be hospital, renal dialysis and some Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS)/Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) costs).

The report also found that investment in prevention and health promotion is important to reduce the burden of illness. The potential impact of increasing investment was also modelled. This involved a staged increase in investments in primary health care across the continuum of health promotion, prevention and clinical care rising to double the 2001–02 levels of resources in real terms over a period of ten years. Modelling estimated that this investment would save an additional three disability adjusted life years per person. There are potential cost savings within the broader health sector resulting from different mixes of investment in health promotion, prevention, clinical primary care for new and existing cases, and hospital care.

Volume 3. Costings Models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services

Authors: Econtech Pty Ltd

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/3costings.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/3costings.pdf)

Terms of Reference

The purpose of the report is to answer the following questions based on the dual nature of health services for Indigenous people:

1. What would have to be spent on primary health services for Indigenous Australians (not distinguishing between general and Indigenous specific health services) to provide per capita expenditure relative to non- Indigenous Australians that reflected relative morbidities? This is a relative needs or population benchmark approach.
2. What would have to be spent on Indigenous-specific primary health services for Indigenous Australians to provide them with universal access to Indigenous specific programs? This is a supply side, or resource requirements approach

Findings

The study noted that per-capita spending on health services would have to be about 2.2 times higher for Indigenous Australians than for non-Indigenous Australians (\$5575 versus \$2518). However, Indigenous people tend to have lower utilization rates of mainstream health services, exacerbated by access difficulties to mainstream services due to the dispersed nature of the Indigenous population. The health circumstances of Indigenous Australians vary significantly, depending on urban, rural and remote settings. Preliminary results, based on generalizing from the case studies to the Indigenous population as a whole, suggest that the total cost of an Indigenous-specific universal primary health care system, on top of Medicare, is in the order of \$409 million (or approximately \$890 per Indigenous person).

More money is required to deliver Indigenous-specific health services in very remote areas, compared to rural and urban areas. The cost per Indigenous person in very remote areas, for example is estimated at \$2789 while the corresponding figure in urban areas is \$399 per capita. The report estimates that a comprehensive service in rural and urban areas may cause the costs to increase significantly from \$409 million to \$570 million. The increase in costs would be considerable because large numbers of Indigenous Australians live in Australian rural and urban areas.

Volume 4. Capacity Development in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service Delivery – Case Studies

Authors: Cindy Shannon and Helen Longbottom, Shannon Consulting Pty Ltd
Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/4capacity.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/4capacity.pdf)

Summary

The case studies used information available at the national and local level. An 'inputs-processes-outputs intermediate outcomes-outcomes' model was used to measure the impact of a health service. Central to the model is acknowledgment of the fact that outcomes are influenced by a myriad of social-economic and biological pathways, and that it is difficult to measure the contribution of a specific factor such as a health program (DoHA 2003). Additionally, the measurement of health outcomes must encompass factors such as changes in physical, social and emotional functioning, quality of life, and levels of empowerment, as well as the more traditional measure of life expectancy.

The model allows for some understanding of the relationships between inputs and outcomes, and acknowledges the lag time between investments in the health care system, capacity building within the system, and health outputs and outcomes. The model describes both intermediate outcomes and outcomes. An intermediate outcome is one that has a direct relationship to the work of a service (an output) and can use evidence from the literature to support its relationship to a health outcome. For example, a service may run a cervical screening program that results in increased rates of screening (an intermediate outcome). There is evidence from literature that increased rates of screening improve health outcomes for cervical cancer (outcome). In many instances it is possible to document changes in intermediate outcomes but it is too early to document changes in actual outcomes.

Volume 5. Cancer, Health Services & Indigenous Australians

Author: John Condon, Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/5cancer.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/5cancer.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The report aimed to examine the performance of the Australian health system in relation to cancer control for Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory.

Findings:

The study provides evidence that the experience of Indigenous Australians and cancer indicates that the Australian health system is not operating as effectively for Indigenous people as for other Australians. Whilst cancer is relatively rare, cancer mortality is higher for Indigenous Australians than other Australians. The high incidence of smoking and alcohol consumption correlates with increased smoking and alcohol related cancers amongst Indigenous Australians. For cervical cancer, Indigenous women have higher incidence and lower survival rates than non-Indigenous women.

However, the report highlights that the incidence of cervical cancer for women can be lessened within a community that prioritises primary health care. The report stresses that the cancers which have higher incidence in Indigenous people are all at least partially preventable in the non-Indigenous population. The report provides evidence that primary health care (particularly Aboriginal community-controlled health services); population health screening; improving specialist service; and community action to reduce behavioural and environmental health factors can reduce the impact of cancers in the Indigenous population.

Volume 6. Maternal and Child Health Care Services: Actions in the Primary Health Care Setting to Improve the Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women of Childbearing Age, Infants and Young Children

Author: Sandra Eades, Menzies School of Health Research

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/6maternal.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/6maternal.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The report draws on evidence from relevant Australian and international health literature and four case studies to present a rationale for strengthening the provision of maternal and child health services through currently funded primary health care services.

Findings:

According to the literature, Indigenous mothers are on average younger than non-Indigenous mothers, with 21.7% of all births being to teenagers compared with 4.5% of non-Indigenous births being to teenagers. Indigenous babies are about twice as likely to be born of low birth weight (12.8% compared with 6.5%). This has been the situation since about 1991, with no national improvements since that time.

The report reviews the relevant health literature and provides an overview of issues, including risk and protective factors relevant to child and maternal health outcomes. These include untreated infections, cigarette smoking and interventions; alcohol use in pregnancy; antenatal knowledge and use of folate to prevent neural tube defects, pregnancy intervals and use of contraception; antenatal health care; postnatal care; breastfeeding; introduction of solids and feeding in the first year of life and immunisation.

The report highlights the importance of access to high quality, appropriate primary health care in improving the health and wellbeing of women during pregnancy and for birth and child health outcomes. Improvements in health outcomes have been demonstrated by a number of Indigenous specific primary health care services. The report also advocates for an increased focus on “across-government initiatives” to meet the early developmental needs of disadvantaged children.

Volume 7. Substance Misuse and Primary Health Care Among Indigenous Australians

Author: Dennis Gray, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology; Sherry Saggars, Centre for Social Research, Edith Cowan University; David Atkinson, Rural Clinical School, University of Western Australia; Phillipa Strempel, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology

Website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/\\$FILE/7substance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-oatsih-pubs-reviewphc.htm/$FILE/7substance.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The purpose of the review is to examine: a primary health care approach to substance misuse among Indigenous Australians in the context of: patterns of use; the health harms associated with substance misuse; the underlying causes of higher levels of use in Indigenous populations; and the broader range of Indigenous substance misuse interventions.

Findings:

Since 1994, there has been an increase in tobacco use, alcohol consumption and cannabis use among the Indigenous population, as measured from the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS). The consequences of substance related health harms are serious, including hospital admissions and death. For example, evidence from Western Australia and the Northern Territory indicates that the hospital admissions rates for tobacco-caused conditions of Indigenous people are at least twice those of non-Indigenous people. Also, hospital admissions for alcohol conditions are at least 1.5 times greater, among Indigenous people. The complexity of issues surrounding substance misuse requires a holistic approach to address the problems such as primary prevention and early intervention. However, unless the underlying social inequalities are addressed (such as education, unemployment and community) and unless Indigenous people are involved, the health impact will be minimal. Collaborations with local communities, other agencies and local, state and territory governments can lead to enhanced effectiveness of substance misuse interventions.

Evaluation of PBS Medicine Supply Arrangements for Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services Under S100 of the National Health Act

Year: 2005

Evaluator: Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health

Website: <http://www.dhac.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pbs-indigenous-report>

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation examined the performance of special PBS medicine supply arrangements for remote area Aboriginal health services under the provisions of s100 of the *National Health Act 1953* in terms of its aims, which were to:

- improve access to PBS medicine by clients of remote area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services (ATSIHS);
- maintain compliance with existing State and Territory statutory requirements; and
- minimise administrative complexity, within the context of appropriate accountability

Findings:

The results of the evaluation indicate that the program resulted in increased access to medicine in all jurisdictions. There was increased access to oral hypoglycaemics, ACE inhibitors, asthma medicine and acute medicines. These medicines are all used to treat conditions particularly problematic in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. S100 has generally not only maintained compliance with State and Territory laws, but in many cases funding from the program has been used to improve it. There are still compliance issues in some jurisdictions, but these do not appear to be the result of the program. According to the evaluation, staff coped well with the administrative aspects of the system and made some concrete suggestions to improve them. However, staff shortages and lack of appropriate systems were issues for both compliance and administration.

The main tension is in determining whether the s100 arrangements should retain their relatively narrow focus, with additional support provided from complementary initiatives such as the support allowance, or whether the program itself should be expanded.

Performance Audit

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) within the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has responsibility for administering the Aboriginal and Torres Islander Health Services program.

The program aims to improve access for Indigenous people to culturally appropriate health care services. Funding is provided to a network of community organisations - mainly some 180 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) organisations, previously known as Aboriginal Medical Services.

Terms of Reference:

The objective of this audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the management, by selected ACCHS, of Commonwealth funding provided by OATSIH.

The scope of the audit focussed on three interconnected risk factors that underpin an ACCHS ability to effectively manage Commonwealth Funds. These risk factors are:

- Capacity to deliver the contracted services to an acceptable standard;
- Viability of the organisation to maintain (and develop) service delivery as an ongoing concern; and
- Compliance with the terms and conditions (obligations) as detailed in the funding agreement.

Findings

To be advised.

Croc Festivals

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs), Department of Finance and Administration

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

Croc Festivals are a series of three day festivals for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students living in remote and rural areas in Australia providing health, education, cultural and sporting activities and include performances by some schools. These festivals provide a vehicle to support Australian Government programmes, policies and strategies that address issues of health, education, employment and community engagement in rural and remote Australia and amongst Indigenous communities. The Croc Festivals are conducted by Indigenous Festivals Australia (IFA), a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The Commonwealth Government is a major sponsor, having contributed \$9.13m (including GST) to the Croc Festival through payments to IFA since its inception in 1998 and committed a further \$3.126m (including GST) for the staging of the 2005 events. The Agreement to supply funding to IFA is administered by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) on behalf of numerous stakeholder agencies.

Terms of Reference:

The overall objective of the audit was to assess whether the Australian Government was receiving value for money in an open and transparent manner, the extent to which the funds had been utilised in accordance with the agreement and whether the intended purposes of the programme were being met.

Findings

The audit identified the following issues:

- While maintaining a whole-of-government approach in terms of stakeholders, the function of administering the service provider (IFA) and the Commonwealth's role has been attributed solely to DoHA. While an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) has been established, this committee has no delegated authority and operates only as a working group. Despite this, the defined contracted outcomes of the total funding provided was broader than that governed by DoHA and DoHA simply does not have direct responsibility for many of the policy objectives that IFA is contracted to deliver. Arguably, the health related outcomes are not the predominate outcomes either, with the main focus on education and attendance at school.

- There is a weakness in the overall governance structure such that:
 - DoHA has no responsibility for a significant proportion of the contracted outcomes and as such is limited in its ability to manage them and address the issue of value-for-money;
 - DoHA encounters difficulties every year securing the funds from the contributing agencies and is consequently impacted in its ability to efficiently administer the contract; and
 - The IDC is not formed by senior representatives of the stakeholder funding agencies and operates only as a working group or consultative committee. If a truly whole-of-government approach is to be adopted, then the function of the IDC and more specifically, the role of DoHA needs to be assessed.

There is insufficient research or data to conclude that the Croc Festivals are the only or most appropriate vehicle for the achievement of the broader government objectives. Notwithstanding the significant benefits that are evident, the review has not been able to conclude that the Commonwealth can demonstrate it is receiving value for money. While continued support in the interim was supported given the existing commitment, an approach to the market was recommended to identify and evaluate the options available.

Planned Evaluations

Evaluation of Bringing Them Home Programs

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Urbis Keys Young

Terms of Reference:

The department has engaged Urbis Keys Young to evaluate its Bringing Them Home and Indigenous Mental Health programs. These comprise the Link Up Program, the Bringing Them Home Counsellors Program, the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Regional Centres Program, and funding for mental health services in Aboriginal medical services.

The evaluation will assess the impact of each program on its client target group(s), and the likely future demand for its services. It will make recommendations to inform future program objectives, directions and alignment. The evaluation will also identify best practice models and possible alternative delivery models for providing services under the programs.

The project commenced in March 2006 and is due to be completed in September 2006.

Research / Review Initiatives

Terms of Reference:

Increased research investment in Indigenous health is proposed according to the priorities identified in the National Health and Medical Research Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Roadmap. Major initiatives for the Health Advisory Committee for 2005-06 will include commissioning the development of new health guidelines and information in identified priority areas, including cardiac rehabilitation in Indigenous communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework

Year: 2006 and then every 2 years

Evaluator: Australian Health Minister's Advisory Council (AHMAC)

Terms of Reference:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework (HPF) was developed under the auspices of AHMAC to:

- measure the impact of the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (NSFATSIH) and inform policy analysis, planning and program implementation;
- provide the basis for streamlining reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and health care delivery; and
- provide a focus for data development activities.

The HPF complements the qualitative reporting on progress in the implementation of the NSFATSIH through the *NSFATSIH Progress Against Jurisdictional Implementation Plans* reports.

The HPF has approximately 90 measures in three groups:

- health status and outcomes;
- determinants of health including socioeconomic and behavioural factors;
- and
- health system performance.

More detailed information on the background and structure of the HPF is given in the paper *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2005*.

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) – Completed Evaluations

Municipal Services for Indigenous Communities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Year: 2001

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and C. Conybeare

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256A500006AA18/\\$file/audit%20report%2036.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/4A256AE90015F69BCA256A500006AA18/$file/audit%20report%2036.pdf)

Summary:

The objective of the audit was to appraise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission's (ATSIC) management of the municipal services component of the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). The audit examined how effectively ATSIC specifies and implements its role, the adequacy with which it identifies relative needs for support through the program among Indigenous communities, and how it leverages improved outcomes from other potential funding sources. The audit concentrated on the municipal services component of CHIP. It did not examine in detail the administration of ATSIC funds allocated through CDEP, as this was the focus of earlier ANAO Performance Audits in 1995–96 (Phase One Audit) and 1996–97 (Phase Two Audit). However, the audit examined coordination between ATSIC program streams.

The ANAO developed the following criteria to assess ATSIC's delivery of municipal services to rural and remote Indigenous communities:

- ATSIC has a clearly defined role in the provision of municipal services to Indigenous communities;
- ATSIC has procedures in place to allocate its resources for municipal services on the basis of national needs;
- ATSIC has administrative mechanisms to ensure Indigenous community organisations receive ATSIC funding to supplement the efforts of other governments; and
- ATSIC collects information to allow it to implement its municipal services role.

Torres Strait Regional Authority Evaluation

Year: 2001

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

The TSRA was established as a separate authority from ATSIC in 1994 following a review of the *ATSIC Act 1989*. It receives funding from the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) to deliver a number of programs for Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal persons living in the Torres Strait area. The area under the TSRA stretches 150kms from the tip of Cape York Peninsula in North Queensland to the south-west coast of Papua New Guinea. Under the budget received from Finance, TSRA distributes grants and loans across twelve separate programs within two overarching Economic and Social and Cultural programs.

The TSRA evaluation focussed on two key economic programmes:

- (a) Community Development and Employment Projects (CDEP); and
- (b) Business Funding Scheme (BFS).

Terms of Reference

- Identify areas of greatest need in the Torres Strait population, and examine the extent to which TSRA has been funding appropriately to the areas of greatest need.
- Determine the performance and outcomes of CDEPs in the Torres Strait.
- Identify other non-labour market benefits to participants of the CDEP. The clearest benefit of the CDEP to participants in the Torres Strait region is the higher income they derive from working in the CDEP than from being unemployed. CDEP participants are also more likely to want to pursue further studies/training, and to identify with their tribal/language group than unemployed persons.
- Identify ways in which the CDEP program could be improved to achieve benefits for all in the CDEP.
- Compare CDEP outcomes/performance in TSRA and ATSIC, and examine, where possible, any connection between differences in the administrative structure of these organisations and their performance/outcomes.

- Determine the performance and outcomes of the BFS program in TSRA.
- Identify ways in which the BFS in TSRA could be improved to achieve benefits for all in the program.
- Compare BFS outcomes in TSRA and ATSIC, and examine where possible, any connection between differences in administrative structure in these two organisations and program outcomes.

Findings

- The 1996 Population Census and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) data showed that employment and housing are clearly the two areas of greatest need for improvement and government intervention in the Torres Strait region.
- The evaluation finds that Torres Strait CDEPs are more adequately staffed than those in the mainland, and they also have a higher representation of indigenous people in senior levels of management in the CDEP.
- Managers of CDEPs need access to a range of resources and opportunities including increased skills and training, and information about other Government agencies.
- This evaluation finds a close parallel in the differences between Torres Strait CDEPs and mainland urban CDEPs, and that between Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) and non-DOGIT CDEPs on the mainland.
- The number of business loans provided to Torres Strait Islanders has increased markedly under the new management when TSRA was established in 1994. The main benefit of the BFS program appears to be in providing business loans access to many small borrowers in the region who would otherwise not have access to such loans from a commercial source.
- Improvements were identified for the BFS program.
- Available data for loans granted in 1997-98 show the overall loan performance of the business funding program in TSRA to be worse than that in ATSIC in terms of bad debts written from the loans portfolio, and especially in terms of loans in serious arrears.

Evaluation of the Link Up Program

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Website: <http://www.finance.gov.au/docs/LinkUp-2003.pdf>

Terms of Reference:

The terms of reference were to:

- identify the type and level of services provided to clients;
- examine the effectiveness of services;
- assess the demand for services and the capacity to meet the demand; and
- assess the effectiveness of the Link Up liaison with and use of counselling and archival services.

Findings:

The six link ups assessed were found in the main to be providing their core activities, dominated by family tracing and reunion activities (60%). Four main measures were used as an illustrative indicator of the effectiveness of the service including the number of reunions as a percentage of clients, and the progression of cases to closure, drop off rates and cost per reunion. The achievement of reunions varied between SA (28%) and QLD (3%). The poorer performing states had a higher drop off rate for reasons other than lack of a reunion. Costs per link up varied greatly (\$7,000 to \$53,000 per reunion) due to the additional funding contributed by some state governments. Client dissatisfaction with link ups is primarily reported as being due to unrealistic expectations.

Demand for link up services is difficult to measure and strongly relates to the level of promotion of the service in the regions. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey suggests that there is a good deal of latent demand (10 – 12% of Indigenous people aged over 25). Capacity to meet demand may be derived by comparing latent need with actual funding. For example, NSW had 30% of the latent need but only 14% of funding. Funding should be increased in NSW and WA and decreased in QLD. Actual numbers of clients who received counselling services was not available. Other findings included that 45% of link up staff were dissatisfied with the counselling service and 40% of link up cases involved the use of archival resources at AIATSIS. The accessibility of other archival resources has improved with greater state contributions.

Indigenous Family Violence: Phase 1 Meta-Evaluation Report

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Strategic Partners

Website: http://www.padv.dpmc.gov.au/projects/padv_phase_one_ifv.pdf

Summary:

The Australian Government has conducted a meta-evaluation of the first phase of its \$50 million Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Initiative (PADVI). The report documents the key findings from the range of PADVI and associated Indigenous family violence projects funded by the Australian Government, categorised into six broad groups: prevention; community education and development; collaboration; counselling and therapeutic interventions; working with men; and community capacity building.

PADVI has provided a unique and groundbreaking opportunity for governments and community organisations to work together to examine ways of addressing the impact of domestic and family violence on women, children and the broader community.

The national collaborative approach has met key objectives and has demonstrated the capacity of the Australian Government, State and Territories to work together with resources, commitment and goodwill to address a major social issue.

National Aboriginal Health Strategy Delivery of Housing and Infrastructure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Follow-up Audit

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and P. Farrelly & Associates Pty Ltd

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/F1717B8031E74528CA256E82007AFF15/\\$file/Audit%20Report%2044.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/F1717B8031E74528CA256E82007AFF15/$file/Audit%20Report%2044.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) provided the ANAO with a written statement commenting on progress against the seven recommendations of the previous audit report. The ANAO then assessed ATSIS' progress in implementing the recommendations by analysing its statement, conducting interviews with relevant ATSIS staff in late 2003 and checking relevant documentation.

Findings:

The ANAO concluded that AT SIS has fully implemented four of the seven recommendations of the previous audit. Specifically, recommendations relating to benchmarking performance, program monitoring, and stakeholder relationships have been implemented. Other recommendations have either been partially implemented or are no longer relevant.

Evaluation of Aboriginal Hostels Limited

Year: 2004

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/docs/AHL_Evaluation_report_for_web2.pdf

Terms of Reference:

The evaluation attempts to measure the likely impact of Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) on its recipients indirectly through indicators including:

- each resident's purpose for staying at the hostels;
- the geographical spread of residents;
- extent of repeat patronage;
- length of stay at hostels;
- the extent to which clients can afford to stay elsewhere; and
- the extent to which non-Indigenous people are using the service.

Findings:

The report found that the average bed occupancy rate in all AHL hostels is 72%, which compares very well with the room occupancy rate of 55% in the tourism accommodation industry, and even more favourably with the more comparable bed occupancy rate in that industry. The report notes that AHL is only a gap provider for homeless, aged and substance use rehabilitation accommodation, and supply of AHL hostels for such accommodation is unavoidably influenced by state government funding decisions in these areas. There is an opportunity for AHL and the Council of Australian Governments to better coordinate the matching of demand and supply for Indigenous housing and accommodation.

The evaluation found that AHL hostels are meeting a real need for accommodation for many who have to travel a long distance to access important services that are otherwise not available where they usually reside. Furthermore, the reasons given by residents for staying at the hostel are satisfactorily consistent with the purpose for which the hostel was established. While the authors conclude that AHL appears to need the most improvement in targeting to areas of greatest need, they also find that patrons of AHL hostels are by and large representative of the most disadvantaged section of the Indigenous population. Hostels appear to be underused by Torres Strait Islanders.

A Red Tape Evaluation in Selected Indigenous Communities

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Morgan Disney & Associates Pty Ltd

Website: <http://www.oipc.gov.au/publications/PDF/RedTapeReport.pdf>

Summary

This evaluation on the administrative burden of government funding programs on Indigenous organisations was undertaken between mid-2005 and January 2006. The evaluation involved a sample of half of the Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs), and 22 Indigenous organisations in receipt of government funding and nominated by the 14 ICCs in the sample. The evaluation set out to establish the extent and nature of the administrative burden commonly known as 'red tape'.

Australian Government funding programs operate under an accountability framework that places obligations on both the funding agency and the organisation receiving funding. The evaluation did not identify anything within this framework which, in and of itself, creates red tape or an unreasonable burden on funded organisations. In the assessment of the evaluators, actual red tape is less than perceived red tape, and many of the issues raised as examples of red tape are in fact about relationships, program management practices, and the capacity of government agencies, ICCs and funded organisations. Thus the evaluation concluded that red tape or unreasonable burden is created primarily at the operational level in terms of how the accountability framework is translated into departmental and local practices.

Possible areas for investigation include:

1. better match the treatment of small grants to the limited risk they represent;
2. improve the quality and usefulness of performance indicators used;
3. support the implementation of improved policy and practical guidance;
4. concurrently, develop a training program for managers and governance bodies of Indigenous organisations;
5. reduce the effort involved in annual appropriations and annual applications for funds;
6. pursue the development of single agreements;
7. give ICCs responsibility and authority in the management of relationships with funded Indigenous organisations; and
8. review the budgets and management of resources for making field visits.

Stronger Families and Communities Strategy 2004-08

Year: On-going from 2006

Evaluator: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW & the Australian Institute of Family Studies

Terms of Reference:

Three of the four strategy initiatives (Communities for Children; Invest to Grow – including established and developing programs; and Local Answers) are being evaluated on an on-going basis.

Out of scope for the evaluation is the Tools and Resources component of Invest to Grow and the Choice and Flexibility in Child Care initiative which will have their own evaluations.

Updated evaluation activities can be found on the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA) website: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/>

Indigenous Community Housing Organisations

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs)

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

Community housing services are provided through some 600 Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) that are primarily funded through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). The estimated expenditure for CHIP is \$292 million in 2006-07.

ICHOs may have several roles including asset and tenancy management, community management, community welfare and municipal services.

The objective of the audit is to assess the community housing activities undertaken by ICHOs funded through the Community Housing and Infrastructure output of CHIP. This will involve an examination of how efficiently and effectively a sample of ICHOs are managed and have used funding for:

- capital construction, purchase and upgrade of community owned or managed rental housing;
- general administration costs; and
- repairs and maintenance of existing housing stock where rental income and service charges are not sufficient to meet the costs involved.

Aspects of the reporting arrangements for program outputs and outcomes will also be examined.

Terms of Reference:

The scope of the audit was confined to activities funded under the *Housing and Housing Related Infrastructure* element of the CHIP program (which comprised \$59.012M of the 2004-05 appropriation of \$249.869M). In addition, the audit was limited to ICHOs which receive funding directly from the Commonwealth (i.e. those in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania). Therefore, details of any poor performing ICHOs operating in states funded under pooled arrangements are not addressed by the audit.

Findings

To be advised

Performance Audits

Torres Strait Regional Authority

Year: 2006

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous Programs), Department of Finance and Administration

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) was originally established as a Statutory Authority under Part 3A Division 1 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989*. It came into effect on 1 July 1994. TSRA comprises a Board of 20 elected Members and is supported by an administrative arm of about 26 staff. Funding of \$56.8 million was allocated to administer TSRA in 2006-07.

TSRA is responsible for many national and regional programmes for people in the Torres Strait, which were previously administered by ATSIC. These include Economic Development, Native Title, Housing and Environment Health Infrastructure, and Social, Cultural and Development. Section 76 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989* required the then Office of Evaluation and Audit to regularly evaluate and audit the operations of TSRA.

Terms of Reference:

The objective of this audit was to form an opinion as to whether the TSRA's Economic Development Programme (EDP) was being managed and administered in an effective and efficient manner, and the extent to which the 'High Priority' recommendations contained in the Office's August 2005 audit report had been progressed and/or implemented.

Findings:

To be advised.

Planned Evaluations

Family and Community Network Initiative

Terms of Reference:

Since February 2003, the Family and Community Network Initiative has been primarily focused on supporting Indigenous communities participating in the Council Of Australian Governments' Indigenous Community Coordination Pilots (ICCP) around Australia. A program evaluation will be finalised in 2005-06 and will examine:

- appropriateness of the program in addressing identified need within the community;
- effectiveness of the program in meeting its objectives and contributing to government outcomes; and
- efficiency of the program in meeting its objectives.

The department also plans to conduct a study on:

- expanding the supply of Health Indigenous Housing.

Evaluations of the Eight COAG Trial Sites

Year: 2005-06

Evaluator: Various

Website: not yet publicly available

Evaluations of all eight Council of Australian Governments (COAG) trial sites are nearing completion, and will be published in 2006-07. The purpose of the trials was to find new ways for governments and Indigenous communities to work together to achieve better outcomes. The evaluations focused on the lessons learnt from the trials, and in particular how governments can improve their engagement with each other and with Indigenous people and communities. The reports include the history of the trial, the coordination processes used in the trial, interim outcomes and options for further consideration. Findings so far indicate that trial partners saw better relationships being built between governments and communities, and among governments. A synopsis review, drawing together common lessons from all the trial regions will take place in the second half of 2006.

Review of Individual Shared Responsibility Agreements

Year: On-going from 2006

Evaluator: Various

These reviews will commence some 12 months after SRAs are signed or at an appropriate review point. They will be conducted by a panel of 10 consultants over a 3 year period. It is anticipated that all but the very low cost SRAs will be reviewed. The first group of reviews should be completed by the third quarter of 2006.

Other Planned Evaluations:

Other planned evaluations include:

- Review of a sample of Communities in Crisis projects initiated between 2003 and 2005
- Implementation review of Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs)
- Implementation review of the Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA) approach

Further information on FaCSIA's planned evaluation activities can be found at:
http://www.oipc.gov.au/documents/OIPC_EvaluationPlan_23May.pdf

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (to July 2004) – Completed Evaluations

Putting the pieces together: Regional plans, data and outcomes

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

This evaluation was conducted as a result of the Programme Manager's demand for regional level data. Regional Planning was one of the key functions of the Regional Councils established under the ATSIC Act. The absence of reliable and comprehensive data for regional planning has been a major issue, although at the national level this issue has been advanced under the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) initiatives.

Terms of Reference:

- Determining what information Regional Councils need to plan effectively;
- Assessing the information available to Regional Councils to assist in planning;
- Identifying information gaps; and
- Developing a conceptual framework to assist Regional Councils in the process of preparing regional plans.

Findings

Availability and accessibility to data are prerequisites for the development of Regional Plans. The lack of information base limits Regional Councils' ability to effectively negotiate with mainstream agencies for service delivery programmes for communities.

The range of information required for developing regional planning includes population, growth, composition, living conditions, spatial distribution, migration patterns, housing and infrastructure and the living environment.

Regional Council plan was considered to be the important document for policy, advocacy policy and development plans representative of the Regions. As part of the evaluation a workshop was held including Regional Council Chairs, Regional Managers and other policy experts. Based on their views a planning framework was developed that could be used by Regional Councils as guide.

Recommendations included a setting up of a statistical coordination unit to establish, develop and monitor data bases for ATSIC Regions; revision of ATSIC Act to allow Regional Councils to enter into agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with mainstream agencies to strengthen the position of Regional Councils in planning and advocacy.

A capacity development program covering planning, advocacy and negotiations is to be provided to members of Regional Councils.

Outcome data measurement: Unfinished business

Year: 2002

Evaluator: Office of Evaluation and Audit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Website: http://www.finance.gov.au/published_oea__ip__evaluation_.html

Background

The absence of reliable and comprehensive data on service delivery programmes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission or those funded by it has been a major impediment for planning and monitoring of programmes. Recognising this limitation COAG asked the Productivity Commission to report on performance information on Indigenous programmes in its annual reports to the Parliament (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision). The major objective of the evaluation was to critically assess the existing data sources for key Indigenous programmes and to indicate to what extent the data could be used for planning and monitoring Indigenous programmes.

Terms of Reference

- Identify the scope and nature of data on outcomes and programme performance to improve outcomes for Indigenous people
- Report on the availability of the data and its potential use in evaluation, and programme and policy formulation and delivery; and
- Present to the Key Managers Conference in early 2002 information on progress, including data availability and its potential applications.

Findings

The evaluation focussed on four subject matter areas: law and justice; health; education and training; and housing and infrastructure. Also, it assessed the quality of population census counts and existing projections.

Over 75 key data sets were reviewed. Some 22 data sets, despite their doubtful coverage (under-identification of Indigenous people), were considered to be reasonably good (reliable) to be used for measuring programme outcomes.

Nine data sets did not identify Indigenous clients/people separately.

Forty-two data sets, although contained valuable information for programme monitoring, had one or more of the following limitations: poor coverage of Indigenous peoples, small sample sizes (or small number of Indigenous clients); poor data quality or incomplete information recorded.

The evaluation strongly recommended the establishment of a statistical unit within the Commission and suggested that there should be a better coordination with other agencies such as ABS, AIHW, AIC and Productivity Commission to improve the coverage and the quality of the Indigenous data.

Audit Report No. 28 2002-03: Northern Territory Land Councils and the Aboriginals Benefit Account

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/6F305A0E51814A79CA256CC2000CAB4E/\\$file/Audit%20Report%2028.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/6F305A0E51814A79CA256CC2000CAB4E/$file/Audit%20Report%2028.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The audit assessed the operations of the four Northern Territory Land Councils which provide a range of services to Aboriginal people under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The audit also assessed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission's (ATSIC) administration of the Aboriginals Benefit Account, which provides funding to the Land Councils under the same Act. The objectives of the audit were to assess: whether the governance arrangements used by ATSIC and the Land Councils are appropriate; whether ATSIC meets its legislative requirements concerning the Aboriginals Benefit Account in an effective and efficient way; and whether the Land Councils are effective and efficient in managing their resources to meet the objectives of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Findings:

Recommendations were made relating to funding and payments, planning and risk management, communication with stakeholders and operations. ANAO made seven recommendations, of which ATSIC and the Land Councils agreed.

Audit Report No. 48 2002-03: Indigenous Land Corporations – Operations and Performance Follow-up Audit

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/E9773CF94646DF0DCA256D44006EA6F3/\\$file/Audit%20Report%2048.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/E9773CF94646DF0DCA256D44006EA6F3/$file/Audit%20Report%2048.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

In 2000, the ANAO tabled Audit Report No 49 1999-2000, Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) operations and performance. The 2000 audit made nine recommendations for improvement. This follow-up audit examined the Indigenous Land Corporation's implementation of the recommendations of the 2000 audit.

Findings:

ANAO made four recommendations as a result of this evaluation. Recommendations were made in relation to performance measurement and reporting, appropriate evaluation regime, quality assurance and stakeholder communication. The ILC agreed to all four of the recommendations.

Audit Report No.13 2003–04: Performance Audit of ATSI Law and Justice Program

Year: 2003

Evaluator: Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

Website:

[http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/EA1872D915D751B6CA256DD70004E737/\\$file/Audit+Report+13.pdf](http://www.anao.gov.au/WebSite.nsf/Publications/EA1872D915D751B6CA256DD70004E737/$file/Audit+Report+13.pdf)

Terms of Reference:

The objective of the audit was to appraise ATSI's management of the Law and Justice Program, with particular regard to the relative needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The audit focused primarily on how effectively ATSI manages and delivers the provision of legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and was designed to complement rather than reproduce previous audit and other evaluation activity relevant to the Program.

Findings:

The ANAO concluded that there is a need for considerable improvement in the management of the Law and Justice Program. ATSI has effective processes in place regarding the oversight of grant allocations, commitments and actual expenditure. However, there are weaknesses in the program's planning processes, the communication of roles and responsibilities between the National Office and the Regional Offices, and the monitoring of the program's performance. The growing volume of services being delivered by ATSI is being achieved on the basis of the efforts of individuals working within those organisations. From an overall program perspective, ATSI has little information or assurance on the quality of the services being provided.