

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background and context

In February 2018, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) released an Evaluation Framework to guide the evaluation of programs and activities under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). This is intended to align with the role of the Productivity Commission in overseeing the development and implementation of a whole-of-government evaluation strategy of policies and programs that affect Indigenous Australians.

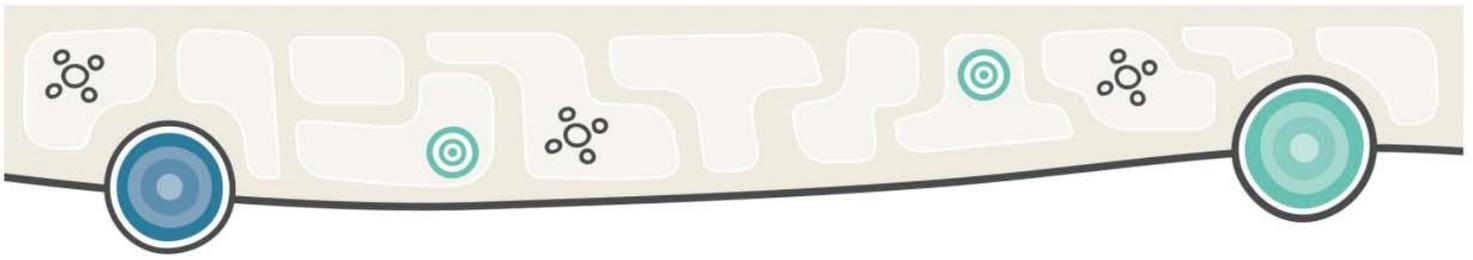
The Evaluation Framework aims to:

- generate high quality evidence that is used to inform decision making;
- strengthen Indigenous leadership in evaluation;
- build capability by fostering a collaborative culture of evaluative thinking and continuous learning;
- emphasise collaboration and ethical ways of doing high quality evaluation at the forefront of evaluation practice in order to inform decision-making; and
- promote dialogue and deliberation to further develop the maturity of evaluation in the Department over time.

The Evaluation Framework is principles-based and supports an impact-oriented monitoring and evaluation system. It is intended to generate and use evidence of how activities funded under the IAS translate to improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians.



Figure 1: Core values and best practice principles guide activities of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Evaluation Framework



Role of the Indigenous Evaluation Committee

The Indigenous Evaluation Committee (the Committee) will support transparency and ensure that the conduct and prioritisation of evaluations is independent and impartial. Its objective will be to strengthen the quality, credibility, and influence of the evaluations of policies and programs led by PM&C through the provision of independent strategic and technical advice.

Responsibilities and Tasks

The Indigenous Evaluation Committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Oversee the implementation of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Evaluation Framework.
- Provide advice to Indigenous Affairs Group (IAG) in preparing its forward program of evaluation and endorse the Annual Evaluation Work Plan.
- Provide technical advice, guidance and quality assurance of IAG's cross-cutting evaluations, and a selection of operational evaluations, to ensure they are high quality, ethical, inclusive and focused on improving outcomes for Indigenous Australians.
- Review and provide a critical summary of cross-cutting evaluation reports.
- Foster leadership and assist in bringing the diverse perspectives of Indigenous Australians into evaluation processes.
- Participate in relevant meetings and events to help promote the Evaluation Framework and continual improvements in evaluation and its use.
- Provide occasional technical advice to PM&C on evaluation activity outside of IAS.

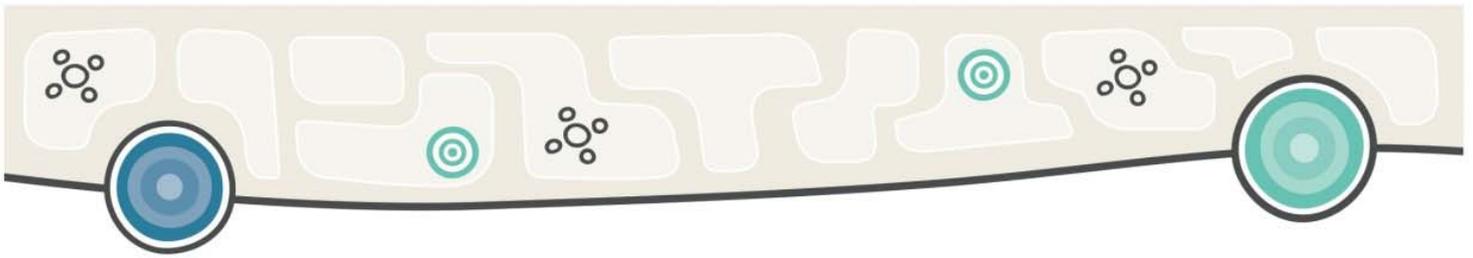
IAG will provide Secretariat services for the Committee, including coordinating and drafting papers for the Committee and preparing minutes of the Committee meetings.

Membership

The Committee will be comprised of three independent external members (including the Chair) and the IAG Deputy Secretary. The new Indigenous Productivity Commissioner and/or members of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) may attend meetings.

The Committee may also invite IAG Division Heads, and/or representatives from other relevant government and non-government organisations to attend meetings where an agenda item is relevant to their area of responsibility. They may attend in the capacity of observer or active participant at the discretion of the Chair.

Representative/s of the Committee should be available to meet with the IAC once a year to discuss evaluation activity.



The Committee will meet physically two to three times a year in Canberra and through telephone/video conference as required by the Chair. It may also consider documents out-of-session at the request of the Chair.

The independent external members will be appointed by the Secretary of PM&C. Membership will be reviewed annually.

Accountability Mechanisms

The Indigenous Evaluation Committee reports through the Chair to the Secretary of PM&C.

Committee members will assist the Chair to carry out the responsibilities and tasks listed and will be available to meet as scheduled.

Conflicts of Interest

All Committee members must declare any actual, possible or perceived conflicts of interest in writing. PM&C will provide Committee members with a Conflict of Interest form to complete and return prior to the first meeting.

All Committee members must declare their outside interests (actual or perceived) at the commencement of each meeting and as they arise out of session. Members must absent themselves from any discussions and judgements that involve activities of any individual, external consulting firm or other organisation in which they have a financial or personal interest.

All Committee members must have a sound understanding of the Australian Public Service (APS) values, set out in section 10 of the *[Public Service Act 1999](#)*.