

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee

## Background

On 30 October 2020, the Productivity Commission released a proposed [Indigenous Evaluation Strategy](#). The Strategy, which has been delivered to the Government, sets out a new approach to evaluating Australian Government policies and programs.

Prior to the release of the Strategy, Vision 2020 Australia submitted a [response](#) to the Draft Indigenous Evaluation Strategy on 3 August 2020 (with consultation and input from members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee and SESC Implementation Working Group).

The table below summarises key points from the Vision 2020 Australia submission, and the response from the Productivity Commission, as reflected in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.

V2020A Recommendations	Released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy
<p><b>Embedding Self-determination</b></p> <p>V2020A recommended the Draft Strategy be amended to embed the language of self-determination, from its objective and principles section through to the way roles, actions and responsibilities are conceptualised and described.</p> <p>Our submission argued doing so would bring the Strategy in alignment with the new National Agreement on Closing The Gap.</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was reflected</b> in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p><i>Page 10: It [Strategy] supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's <u>rights to self-determination and aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap</u> by emphasising the need for governments to change the way they work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</i></p> <p><i>Page 15: Evaluations support the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by providing evidence on how policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are contributing to the National Agreement's objectives and priorities.</i></p> <p>This wording was not in the Draft Strategy, but has now been included in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Indigenous Data Sovereignty</b></p> <p>In addition to referencing self-determination, V2020A recommended the Strategy actively acknowledge, reference and commit to supporting Indigenous Data Sovereignty.</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was not reflected</b> in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p>The released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy does make reference to “..ownership, management and communication of data and results be negotiated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and processes are agreed to at an early stage” (<a href="#">page 17</a>).</p>

<p><b>Maximising the benefits of cross sector evaluation strategy and resources</b></p> <p>V2020A encouraged the Productivity Commission to consider how the final evaluation strategy can support consistency in evaluation approaches across all organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (including those outside government).</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was reflected</b> in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p><i>Page 14: Useful evaluations consider the needs of a range of end-users — including governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities — and tailor questions, approaches, interpretation and reporting accordingly.</i></p> <p>This wording was not in the Draft Strategy, but has now been included in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Seeking perspectives from ‘interfacing’ stakeholders</b></p> <p>V2020A recommended the Strategy consider creating an obligation for the evaluation process to have regard for the perspectives of others working with communities and/or interfacing with the programs; to provide insights into how they fit into the broader system and contribute towards integration of effort.</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was reflected</b> (somewhat) in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p><i>Page 15: Evaluation questions address issues that are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other intended users of evaluation findings.</i></p>
<p><b>Preferencing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise, building local capacity</b></p> <p>V2020A recommended the Strategy should prioritise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons for delivery of key elements of evaluation processes (e.g. data collection and analysis), by increasing community involvement and drawing upon local knowledge to enhance cultural safety, local knowledge, expertise and understanding of the evaluation processes.</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was reflected</b> in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p><i>Page 27: (Action 6) Agencies should strengthen and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s capability to engage, partner and lead in evaluation. Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities to strengthen evaluation capability, including by engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander evaluators and community researchers and providing training and development opportunities.</i></p>
<p><b>Maximising the potential for a systems approach</b></p> <p>V2020A strongly supported the proposed establishment of an Indigenous evaluation clearing house, to make evaluation reports readily available.</p>	<p> This recommendation <b>was reflected</b> in the released Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.</p> <p><i>Page 28: (Action 10) The Australian Government should establish and maintain an online evaluation evidence clearinghouse — the Indigenous Evaluation Clearinghouse — as a repository for reports of evaluations of policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</i></p>