



Year One Report Summary: Site Engagement

Evaluation of the Australian Government's Investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care through the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP Yarnes).

Date: July 2020

The *Year One Site Engagement Report* provides an overview of the site engagement processes and outcomes for IAHP Yarnes. The short name for the evaluation, 'IAHP Yarnes', stands for **yarning, action, reflection, national evaluation, systems**.

What did we do and who did we meet with?

- The Yarnes team visited 18 of the 20 evaluation sites between October and December 2019. At that stage, we were still waiting on ethics approval for the remaining two sites.
- The evaluation team met with 23 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and 11 PHNs across 18 sites.
- The site engagement process was led by the Aboriginal members of the IAHP Yarnes team.
- The initial visits focused on meeting and talking with potential evaluation site partners from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), Primary Health Care (PHC) providers that deliver services to a predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and Primary Health Networks (PHNs).
- The site engagement meetings variously included Chief Executive Officers (CEOs); Chief Medical Officers (CMOs); Clinical Services Directors; Policy Advisors; Program Leads and Practice Managers. PHNs were represented by CEOs, Commissioning Managers, and Program Managers across a range of programs.

What did we learn?

- Two-way learning opportunities built the IAHP Yarnes team members' understanding of contextual factors including each sites strengths, challenges and resourcing.
- Relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and PHNs vary, with some being strong and others taking time to build positive connections.



- Health services appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively on an evaluation that focuses on improving health systems rather than individual organisations.
- There was strong interest in the Local Evaluation Coordinator roles, some noting that this is a resource not often offered in evaluation and research projects. Several sites are keen to use the LEC role as an opportunity to build evaluation and research capacity.
- Some sites considered the evaluation as an opportunity to gain access to data which they would not normally have, and to learn more about what their community values in terms of healthcare, and how they experience the health system. The evaluation is considered a good opportunity to share their model of health care, tell and have their stories heard by a wider audience.
- Health services commonly reported limited capacity to resource an evaluation of this scale. Some site stakeholders were concerned that IAHP Yarnes might be a burden on top of existing evaluation or research being conducted in their site.
- Most sites agreed with the site boundaries as currently identified. In the initial discussions, several site stakeholders provided a rationale for why a boundary might need to be modified.

What were the outcomes?

- The site visits were met with majority interest and enthusiasm with twelve sites keen to move to the next step of holding a comprehensive planning workshop to discuss and sign a Participation Agreement and tailor and agree an evaluation plan for their site.
- A further four sites indicated interest sighting further consultation with their respective organisations was needed, or more specific information was needed from the team relating to data and methodological questions.
- Two other sites noted they were not currently in a position to participate due to other organisational priorities.
- Two were waiting ethics approval at the time of the first site visits.

What happens next?

The key actions for the IAHP Yarnes team from the initial site engagement process include:

- Developing support material for the planning workshops that address the matters raised during the initial meetings, including:
 - discussion of the resourcing package to support participation in the evaluation;
 - negotiating locally meaningful site boundaries for some;
 - more detailed information about the quantitative data that is being considered through the data feasibility assessment process (DFA), along with how the contribution of the IAHP will be analysed;

- likelihood of the evaluation influencing change in national policy and systems.
- Considering efficient ways of collecting data to minimise further burden on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services.
- Collaborative processes between some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and PHNs to facilitate health system change at the site level will require extra time and, in some cases, extra resources dependent on the level of engagement and frequency required. There will be a need to hold some planning workshops with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services and PHNs independent of each other.

The Yarnes evaluation team would like to thank all participants for their time, discussions and input to the Year One Report. A full copy of the report can be read at: www.iahpyarnes.com

Due to the situation with COVID-19, site engagement with the proposed 20 sites has now been paused and will be restarted when conditions permit.

For further information on the evaluation, please visit our website www.iahpyarnes.com or email iphceval@allenandclarke.com.au to subscribe to the newsletter updates.

Evaluation Partners



IAHP Yarnes Artwork

The original artwork was produced by Emma Walke. Emma is a Bundjalung Aboriginal woman from northern NSW and was part of the evaluation team which designed and set-up the evaluation. Here is her description of the artwork:

Because I don't speak for every country, and because we are working across many of them, the work seeks to represent Indigenous Australia. I feel that colour makes a statement so I have used colours that can be linked to many of our communities and countries, land or sea based. The colours represent our people and the land they come from – ochres/yellows represent desert and hills and the cliffs where our ochres come from. Blues for ocean and blue greens for rivers.

The circles are universal in the way they represent groups or clans of people, the markings inside some of the circles represent individuals.

The dots and slashes are representational of tracks and time lines. There are a few blank circles – they represent the missing, the lost peoples.

I thought I would try and incorporate the colours to show respect for them.