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Question on Notice - Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation: Evaluation of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia

Question

Could you give us a detailed framework for how you're thinking about your evaluation and reporting on it at all levels?

Response

Overview of the White Paper

- The White Paper on Developing Northern Australia was released on 18 June 2015. Now two years into the 20-year northern Australia implementation plan, thirty-one of the 51 White Paper measures are reported as delivered or finalised and the remaining 20 are well underway.
- The Office of Northern Australia (ONA), within the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS), is responsible for the overall implementation of the White Paper and developing an evaluation framework for the whole package of 51 measures.
- The White Paper is being implemented and evaluated under six broad White Paper policy pillars:
 - Simpler land arrangements to support investment
 - Developing the north's water resources
 - Our business, trade and investment gateway
 - Infrastructure to support growth
 - A northern workforce for growth
 - Good governance for Northern Australia.

Implementation Plan of the White Paper

- An implementation plan for each of these key policy pillars has been provided in the White Paper, including the major milestones to be achieved and the expected timeframe. This is provided on pages 122-132 of the White Paper.

Evaluation of the White Paper

- There are two key components to the evaluation of the White Paper:
 1. Individual evaluations for each of the 51 White Paper measures. This is the responsibility of individual delivery agencies.
 2. Overall White Paper evaluation. This is the responsibility of the ONA.
- Both of these components are interlinked, with the first requiring similar data collection to feed into the second component.
- The DIIS Evaluation Unit, supported by the ONA, is facilitating a series of interagency evaluation workshops to assist agencies to develop appropriate evaluation strategies for each White Paper measure they are responsible for. While each agency determines their own evaluation (and is responsible for any costs), the ONA works closely with all agencies to ensure the individual evaluations will assess outcomes that support the broader White Paper evaluation and that their evaluation methodology and data collection is broadly consistent.
- Where possible, the evaluation strategy uses existing data and reporting to minimise the reporting burden.
- The evaluation process includes a post commencement evaluation, monitoring evaluation and impact evaluation.
- Three workshops have been undertaken to date, with evaluation strategies for each White Paper measure expected to be in place by 30 June 2018.

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