

**Senate Finance and Public Administration  
References Committee  
Inquiry into CDP – Canberra (8 September 2017)  
Questions on Notice for the  
Australian Council of Social Service**

**Questions from Hansard**

Question No.	Asked by	Question
1.	Senator McAllister (p. 4)	<p><b>CHAIR:</b> Before we let you go, Dr Goldie, I have something I want to ask you. The government has announced its intention to consult on a new model for the CDP. That was announced in May in the budget. Have you been invited to participate in any specific consultation process around the CDP?</p> <p><b>Dr Goldie:</b> There has been a significant amount of contact from the department about many welfare bills, and I am pausing in this moment. Peter, can you answer with confidence? Otherwise, I'll take it on notice.</p> <p><b>Mr Davidson:</b> I'm not aware of any approach directly on that. We, of course, submitted to an earlier inquiry into that measure.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> Yes, there was a bill.</p> <p><b>Mr Davidson:</b> But I'm not aware of approaches from the minister or the department. Perhaps we can take that on notice to confirm.</p>

Here is our response to the two questions:

While it is standard practice for the relevant Department to commission evaluations of major programs like CDP, ACOSS was not aware of this evaluation until the Department's submission to this Inquiry was published. We are not aware of any consultations entered into by the Department over the purpose and design of the evaluation.

We understand the evaluation commenced in 2016. Normally by this stage preliminary data or an interim report would be available to the department and it would be helpful for that information, if available, to be made public now. This would provide valuable input to the government's, the communities' and the Parliament's consideration of reform of the CDP program.

We understand the government has allocated resources in the 2017 Budget to the Productivity Commission to report on evaluation strategies for programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples generally. This may or may not include an assessment of the impacts of the CDP.

As a general rule, the following are minimal requirements for a valid evaluation of an employment program that mainly assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- deep and transparent consultation with the communities affected and representative bodies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the purpose, methods and design of the evaluation and how the researchers intend to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities affected.
- following this, a clear statement of the purpose of the evaluation and what it will measure
- collection of baseline data regarding the characteristics and outcomes (especially employment outcomes) of people expected to be eligible to participate in the program, prior to the program's commencement
- quantitative assessment of the value added by the program (especially the difference the program makes to employment and skills outcomes), by comparing outcomes for valid treatment and control groups (data describing the number and share of participants who enter employment are not measures of value-added; we need to know how many people would have obtained jobs in the absence of the program)
- qualitative assessment of the participant and community experience of the program, using interviewers and an interview method that is culturally appropriate, inspires trust, and gives people permission to reflect honestly on their experience (this is a major weakness of many 'surveys' of the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with public programs; all too often people provide answers they believe will be acceptable to interviewers and officials rather than true reflections of their experience - for example, 'my children are better cared for now')
- quantitative and qualitative assessment of the process of establishing the program, and flows of people through different stages of the program, including the characteristics of participants and non-participants.
- background data on the circumstances of the communities affected including labour markets, other support services, impacts of remoteness, and governance.

We suggest the Committee seek further advice on the conduct of valid and effective evaluations of these programs from an independent academic source, for example the CAEPR at ANU.

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/pmc/Accountability%20and%20reporting%20section/budget-fact-sheet-evaluation.pdf>

---

[2017-18 Budget: Strengthening Indigenous research & evaluation](#)

[www.pmc.gov.au](http://www.pmc.gov.au)

1 2017-18 Budget: Strengthening Indigenous research & evaluation What was announced in the 2017 Budget? •  
Indigenous Australians will benefit from investment in ...

---