

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

Evaluation in Australian Health and Welfare Services

**Report from the Senate
Standing Committee on Social Welfare**

VOLUME ONE

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Reference

Evaluation of the adequacy of Australian health and welfare services with particular reference to:

1. standards of performance and provision of health and welfare services;
2. the pattern of current practice in the provision of such services in terms of need and demand;
3. mechanisms for evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of health and welfare services; and
4. requirements for ongoing evaluation as an integral part of the development of health and welfare service programs.

(Referred by the Senate on 2 June 1976)

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

1 Corinthians 13:12

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made in this report are brought together and listed here for convenient reference.

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1. That the Departments of Social Security and Health define their activities in program terms and apportion costs, including departmental overheads, accordingly	47
2. That functional categories in the Commonwealth budget be further broken down to identify spending on individual government programs and to enable the cost of each program to be seen	47
3. That the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure be invited to formulate proposals for changes or additions necessary for the Commonwealth budget to become a management tool more appropriate to monitoring of the attainment of policy goals	47
4. That a Commonwealth department or a particular program be chosen for a trial of zero base budgeting, the trial to be fully costed and publicly documented	47
5. That the Commonwealth Government ensure that all health and welfare evaluation reports presented by or to it be tabled and printed as parliamentary papers, and that State Governments be encouraged to do the same	47
6. That evaluation reports tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament be referred to relevant committees of both Houses of the Parliament	47
7. That a committee of the Parliament be asked to investigate the possible use of sunset provisions in legislation	47
8. That the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet be charged with the responsibility for ensuring that adequate program evaluation is carried out by all Commonwealth authorities, and that it certify annually that the results of such evaluations have been properly reported to the Parliament	47
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11. That the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, in co-operation with the non-government health and welfare sector, formulate and publish basic minimum data requirements for the assessment of levels of need in health and welfare services	61
12. That instrumentalities with programs designed to answer need be responsible for the collection, updating and dissemination of appropriate statistics relevant to measuring levels of need	61
13. That the non-government welfare sector be given specific grants for the collation and publication of data already collected by agencies with programs designed to answer need	61
14. That funding proposals by government departments and by non-government agencies receiving government funds be required to identify need in an approved, objective fashion and that independently funded bodies be encouraged to do the same	61
15. That:	
(a) all collected data on need be published, irrespective of their quality; and	
(b) lists of what data are available be published also	61
16. That legislation establishing new programs within government authorities include a requirement that measures of unmet and satisfied need be detailed in the annual reports of the relevant authority	61
17. That non-government agencies receiving government funds be required to furnish publicly, at specified intervals, measures of unmet and satisfied need	61
18. That independently funded bodies be encouraged to make statements of unmet and satisfied need in their annual reports	61

Chapter 5 *Goals and objectives*

19. That the Commonwealth and each State Government, in association with the non-government sector and consumers, declare in writing, clearly and publicly, (a) broad strategic goals for its health and welfare programs, and (b) precise and testable objectives for each program in which it is involved, either directly or as a funding authority; and that, in the Commonwealth sphere, the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, if necessary, be charged with the planning, oversight and implementation of these proposals	70
20. That all governments state clearly, in relevant legislation, their goals for health and welfare initiatives	70

Chapter 6 *Standards*

21. That all professional groups develop and disseminate comprehensive standards of performance for the guidance of their members and for the protection and information of clients	78
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22. That the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat be instructed to develop a co-operative strategy which will ensure that appropriate standards are progressively developed in Australian health and welfare services before 1981 and that mechanisms are established for regular review and updating of these standards	78
23. That the Commonwealth and each State Government set and disseminate appropriate, comprehensive structure and distribution standards for health and welfare services under its control	78

Chapter 7 *Data*

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25. That a Green Paper be produced to establish what criteria should be set for social indicators, and the measures of these criteria that could be developed	90
26. That the Commonwealth Government support and encourage research into the development of social indicators, including those dealing with human reactions to identified sociocultural changes	90
27. That the Commonwealth Government direct the Australian Bureau of Statistics to raise to an appropriate level the proportion of its budget spent specifically on health and welfare statistics	93
28. That the Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for health and social welfare direct the National Working Party on Welfare Statistics and the National Working Party on Health Statistics to produce within two years, in consultation with the non-government health and welfare sector, a list of priorities for the identification and collection of basic outcome data	93
29. That the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat be required to report publicly, and within two years, on priorities for the identification and collection of health and welfare data	93
30. That the non-government health and welfare sector be given grants to enable it to report on the data priorities of non-government health and welfare organisations	93
31. That data obtained from any future census be fully processed and made available without delay, and that resources appropriate to this task be provided	93

Chapter 8 *Models and prospects for future evaluation*

32. That the Social Welfare Policy Secretariat, either alone or after appropriate consultations, prepare a document, or a number of documents, outlining the methods available to organisations for the evaluation of their activities	100
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33. That the Departments of Health and Social Security provide a consultancy service, free of charge, to enable organisations receiving health and welfare grants from the Federal Government to evaluate their own activities	101
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