

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Indigenous Advancement Strategy

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

Question reference number: 181

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2016

Number of pages: 2

Question:

What evaluation tools do you intend to undertake to determine the effectiveness of either the program as a whole or the individual measures funded in each stream?

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) uses a range of evaluation tools to determine the effectiveness of funded activities. PM&C often use mixed methods which combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. For example, the current evaluation of the Community Development Programme and the Stronger Communities for Children activity use participatory action research methods such as surveys of program participants undertaken by local Aboriginal researchers alongside analysis of administrative data.

The evaluation tools include the following methods and approaches:

- Administrative, Census and survey data are used to assess changes in outcomes such as employment, education, child development, youth engagement, crime, safety, and health and wellbeing.
- Control group studies that allow the impact of activities to be measured by comparing outcomes for participants with matched non-participants.
- Randomised controlled trials (RCT) are being used in order to assess the impact of selected activities. An RCT is currently in operation to assess the impact of the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure.
- Surveys of participants, community members, service providers and stakeholders.
- Case studies involving field research in a selection of communities involving interviews, focus groups and surveys: to help identify and explain variation in outcomes between participants and across communities and identify contextual factors influencing success.

These tools are used in combination to design evaluations which undertake methodologically and ethically appropriate analysis of the effects of activities. These support measurement of

the direct net effects resulting from specific activities or establish whether interventions are associated with change in behaviour in local contexts.

PM&C also regularly analyse a wide range of data at a region level for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people including hospitalisation, school attendance, crime and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data.