

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(246) Output 3.1: Whole-of-Government Coordination of Policy Development and Service Delivery for Indigenous Australians

Senator Siewert asked:

1. Are you aware of the findings of the Productivity Commission's 2005 report on Indigenous Disadvantage, and are its findings relevant to the evaluation of DIMIA's policy, programs and services?
2. How is policy development and coordination within OIPC addressing the findings of this report?

Answer:

The Government is aware of the findings of the report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2005* (OID report) developed by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision. This report seeks to provide a reporting framework to help with planning and monitoring progress in overcoming disadvantage.

The Headline Indicators in the report are used to measure progress towards the achievement of three Priority Outcomes, widely endorsed by Indigenous people. These priorities cover essentially the same areas as the three priorities adopted by this Government under its new arrangements in Indigenous affairs: early childhood intervention; safer communities; and building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture, agreed through the Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) on Indigenous Affairs, and in consultation with the new National Indigenous Council (NIC).

The Headline Indicators are, however, slow to respond to government policy intervention and in some cases may take up to ten years before any significant improvement can be expected. The Government is therefore focusing its whole-of-government effort on the seven Strategic Areas for Action identified in the report, where policy intervention is more likely to achieve short to medium-term outcomes.

The Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) within the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) is using the OID report in a practical way to drive planning and monitor progress in regard to the seven Strategic Areas for Action. As an example, the new Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) between the Government and Indigenous communities include performance indicators structured around the seven areas.

Another example where OIPC is using the report is in the development of a report from the MTF to the Expenditure Review Committee to report on performance in 2004-05. The report, framed

against the seven Strategic Areas for Action, will accompany the Single Indigenous Budget Submission for 2006-07.

Through its membership of the working group for the OID report, OIPC actively supported the development of the report, and continues to support the work of the Steering Committee in relation to future editions of the report.