



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Reference: B14/1788

Dr Andrew Southcott MP  
Chair  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

  
Dear Dr Southcott

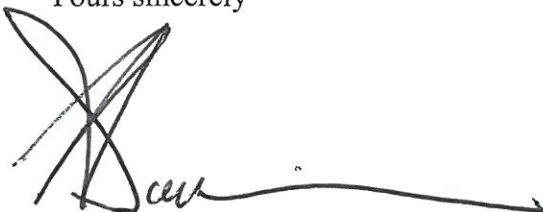
I refer to the report by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit *Report 437 Review of Auditor-General's Reports Nos. 2 to 10 (2012-13)*. As a result of the machinery of government changes following the 2013 election, responsibility for this report now sits with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. I am pleased to provide the Government's formal response to the report (enclosure 2 refers).

With regard to the report's recommendations, recommendations three and four are considered administrative in nature and are both supported. Responses to recommendations three and four are included in the Executive Minute attached to this letter, signed by the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Dr Ian Watt AO (enclosure 1 refers).


Recommendations one, two and five go to matters of policy. The Government's response to these recommendations is now ready for tabling. An embargoed, courtesy copy for the committee is included with this letter and will be publicly available once the response has been tabled in Parliament. Tabling is expected to occur on 26 June 2014.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a formal response to this report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION

 23 June 2014



## Australian Government

### Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

## EXECUTIVE MINUTE

on

### JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

#### REPORT No.437

#### Review of Auditor-General's Reports Nos. 2 to 10 (2012-13)

#### Response to recommendations three and four

##### **Recommendation No. 3**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs examine methods and lead efforts to improve the availability of location-based data on Indigenous expenditure and outcomes, including through spatial mapping, in order to inform the public and the policy-making process.

Supported.

The former FaHCSIA undertook a number of activities that address this recommendation. As an example the evaluation of the Remote Service National Partnership Agreement has involved bringing together a very large amount of place-based data for the affected communities.

The Australian Government Indigenous Locations (AGIL) dataset contains location information (community name, alternate names, geocode coordinates) for approximately 1500 community locations across Australia including where Commonwealth services are delivered to Indigenous Australians. Business ownership of the AGIL dataset was transferred to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet under the recent machinery of government changes.

The Commonwealth continues to work with the States and Territories to provide better place-based data. From 2014 nationally consistent data on school attendance will be collected for all schools in Australia for the first time.

From July 2012 all jurisdictions have been collecting information on the Indigenous status of babies through the Perinatal National Minimum Dataset. As a result of recent improvements, nationally consistent data on antenatal care in the first trimester will be available for reporting from 2013. Nationally consistent data on smoking during pregnancy will be available for all jurisdictions from 2013. All of these data can be provided for individual places if minimum reporting requirements that are designed, among other things, to ensure individual people are not identified, are met.

Through the Indigenous Expenditure Report (IER) comprehensive data are now available on estimates of government spending on Indigenous Australians. According to the IER, 78 per cent of all spending on Indigenous Australians is through mainstream programs and services. The Commonwealth will explore the costs and benefits of collecting data on spending on Indigenous Australians by remoteness area.

**Recommendation No. 4**

The Committee recommends that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs provide an update within six months on its progress towards implementing the Auditor-General's recommendation that it further develop its performance measurement approach to assess whether services have improved in the priority communities, and the results of this assessment to date. The update should include any decisions or other progress that has been made in regard to the future of the remote service delivery model, including any proposals to expand the model into other communities or into urban or regional areas.

Supported.

The initial recommendation that FaHCSIA develop a performance measurement approach was included in Audit Report No.43 2011–12 on the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (NPARSD). In response to this recommendation, the former FaHCSIA developed a Performance Measurement Framework. The Framework is attached to the RSD Implementation Review which was publicly released in June 2013.

The Performance Measurement Framework outlines how progress towards achieving the NPARSD outcomes and objectives is measured and reported. It includes a set of core national outcomes indicators which allow a consistent analysis of progress across all 29 Remote Service Delivery (RSD) sites and comparison with indicators reported in the RSD baseline mapping reports prepared in 2010. Some of this progress reporting was published as part of the Implementation Review and other elements will be published in the report of the RSD 2013 Final Evaluation.

*Signed by*



I J Watt  
Secretary

4/2/14