



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Closing the gap

clearinghouse

An online clearinghouse for
evidence-based research on
overcoming disadvantage for
Indigenous Australians

www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap



Outline

- The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse
- Products of the CH
- Governance and advice for the Clearinghouse team

- Australian Government engagement with the Clearinghouse



About the Clearinghouse

- A central online source of research on activities that work to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage
- COAG initiative, jointly funded by all governments and is delivered by the AIHW in collaboration with AIFS



How is it different?

- Focuses on what works to solve problems rather than on outlining the nature or extent of the problems
- Features research which is quality-assessed by experts



Clearinghouse aims

- To provide policy-makers and program managers with an evidence base for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage
- Efforts will be directed across 7 building blocks which support the 6 COAG targets



COAG targets

- To close the gap in **life expectancy** within a generation
- To **halve mortality rates** for Indigenous children under 5 within a decade
- To ensure all Indigenous 4 year olds in remote communities have access to **early childhood education within 5 years**
- To halve the gap in **reading, writing and numeracy** achievements for Indigenous children within a decade
- To halve the gap in **Indigenous students in year 12 equivalent attainment** by 2020
- To halve the gap in **employment outcomes** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade



COAG Building Blocks

- Early childhood
- Schooling
- Health
- Economic participation
- Healthy homes
- Safe communities
- Governance and leadership



Clearinghouse products

- General collection of research papers
- A Quality-assessed collection - focus of CtG CH
- Issues papers
- Resource sheets
- Gaps in research and future priorities
- Online research and evaluation register



General collection

- A collection of research items related to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage
- Contains research material relevant to the 7 COAG building blocks
 - early childhood
 - schooling
 - health
 - economic participation
 - healthy homes
 - safe communities
 - governance and leadership



General collection 4,650 items

Building Block	Number of items
Early childhood	1,468
Schooling	836
Health	1,758
Economic participation	931
Healthy homes	553
Safe communities	1,443
Governance and leadership	175
Total	7,164

Note: Items can be counted in one or more building blocks



The Assessed collection will focus on what works ...

- Research and information on activities that work
- Research analysing the cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness of programs and activities
- Research on adapting and implementing mainstream programs and policies to Indigenous contexts
- Programs, strategies and practices for responding to traumatised individuals and communities across the building blocks



Assessed collection

- Items assessed by experts in relevant areas
- Online Assessment checklist (tool) to be used for assessing the research
- Assessment tool has three sections:
 - Common issues
 - Methods
 - Results and conclusion
- Display of key findings of the research and summaries
- Assessment rating



Assessment rating

Based on the evidence from this research, the activity is rated as having:

- Highly successful outcomes; best-practice activity
- Generally or moderately positive outcomes; no significant negatives
- Generally positive outcomes, but some significant negative effects
- Neutral impact; variable results or difficulty to interpret
- Generally negative outcomes, but with some less significant positive learnings
- Serious negative outcomes



Priority areas for 2009-10

- School readiness
- Early literacy and numeracy
- School attendance and retention
- Labour force participation
- Community safety
- Indigenous mortality risk factors



QA items and Subject Specialists

Building block	QA items	Subject specialists
Early childhood and schooling *	121	25
Health *	50	22
Economic participation *	42	10
Healthy homes	2	0
Safe communities *	53	14
Governance and leadership	2	3
Total (including cross cutting)	270	74



Issues papers

In-depth papers focusing on evidence that is relevant to the COAG building blocks and priority topics

- School attendance and retention
- School readiness including health and learning aspects of early childhood development



Resource sheets

Concise summaries of activities, research or policy issues relevant to the COAG building blocks and priority topics



Resource sheets

- Pathways for school leavers to undertake training or gain meaningful employment
- Community development approaches to safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children
- Healthy eating and lifestyle programs for Indigenous communities



Gaps in research report

An annual report identifying gaps in the available research and evaluation evidence and advising on priorities for future research



Online register

- An online register of research and evaluation relevant to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage (building blocks)
- Encourage collaboration and coordination of research and evaluation
- Avoid duplication
- Always looking for research projects to add to the online register, a form is available on the website



Research and Evaluation Register

Building Block	Number of items
Early childhood	20
Schooling	42
Health	112
Economic participation	30
Healthy homes	19
Safe communities	49
Governance and leadership	22
Total	294

Note: Items can be counted in one or more building blocks



Clearinghouse Board

- Provides strategic directions to the Clearinghouse to:
 - ensure it addresses COAG’s priorities for closing the gap
 - ensure there is a connection between the work of the Clearinghouse and the policy requirements of governments
- Comprises eight members, including:
 - a chair
 - two academic advisors
 - two Australian Government representatives
 - two State/Territory representatives
 - two Clearinghouse representatives (AIHW and AIFS)
- Has two Indigenous members



Scientific Reference Group

- Provides subject-specific and technical advice on Clearinghouse material including:
 - standards for assessing the evidence
 - priorities for future research and evaluation based on gaps in the evidence
 - issues papers and resource sheets produced by the Clearinghouse
- Consists of seven members, selected based on their subject matter expertise
- Has two Indigenous experts



Communication Strategy

- Presentations on the work of the Clearinghouse to jurisdictions and Commonwealth departments
- Presentations at relevant conferences
- Quarterly e-newsletters
- Online events calendar
- Help desk



Who can use the Clearinghouse?

- Policy-makers and program managers
- Indigenous communities
- Service providers
- Researchers
- Other clearinghouses
- General public



Why come to the Clearinghouse?

- Read the resources of the Clearinghouse
- Find quality-assessed research on issues you are working on
- Check the online research and evaluation register to collaborate or avoid duplication
- Contribute information about your (in-progress or completed) research and evaluation for our online register



Australian government engagement with the Clearinghouse

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on an Indigenous Clearinghouse, all governments have a shared responsibility to:
 - fund the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse
 - work cooperatively to ensure the effective outcomes of the Clearinghouse
 - contribute research and evaluation reports relevant to the scope of the Clearinghouse
 - participate in the annual user satisfaction survey
 - engage with the Clearinghouse:
 - Contribute to the online calendar of events
 - Send names of subject specialists or QA items
 - Receive e-newsletters



HelpDesk

- Enquiries are welcome on any aspect of the Clearinghouse:
 - feedback/suggestions
 - contributions to the quality-assessed collection
 - contributions for the online research and evaluation register
 - contribution for the events calendar and e-newsletter
 - questions about the availability of specific material in the collection or assistance with searching
 - requests for promotional material



The CtG Clearinghouse website

www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap

- Clearinghouse website went live in October 2009
 - Home page
 - Publication page
 - Resource page
 - Research and evaluation register
- Search functions
- Contact via 1 800 phone number or email



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