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# PROGRAM EVALUATION UNIT

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## Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Allied Health Projects EVALUATION SUPPORT

### WHAT EVALUATION SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (CDHA) has commissioned the Program evaluation Unit at the University of Melbourne to provide evaluation support to Divisions who are running Allied Health Projects.

### WHAT SHOULD DIVISIONS CONSIDER WHEN CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS?

1. What does the CDHA expect in relation to the evaluation of Allied Health Projects? Your contract should clearly outline what you must report on to the CDHA in your interim and final reports
2. What is the relationship between your local evaluation and the national evaluation? The local evaluations will examine the processes/structures and impacts/outcomes of each Project, taking into account the local model and context. The national evaluation will synthesise the information from the local evaluation reports, and provide an overview of the Projects by bringing together information in the minimum dataset (see below). Divisions (or their external evaluators) are responsible for their local evaluations; the PEU is responsible for the national evaluation.
3. What questions is the CDHA interested in answering through the local evaluations? The document entitled 'Access to Allied Health Services Pilots Evaluation' outlines nine questions that the CDHA is interested in answering, where possible, through the local evaluations. It will not be possible for a given local evaluation to answer all nine questions, but an attempt should be made to address all relevant questions.
4. What information is required for the minimum dataset? You should be aware of the minimum dataset, which is currently being tested. This is described in detail in the document entitled 'Evaluation of the Access to Allied Health Pilots: Minimum Dataset', and is designed to capture socio-demographic, clinical and treatment information about patients collected during their encounters with the GP and the allied health professional, as well as some information about participating providers and Divisions. This information is regarded as the 'minimum' that Divisions should be collecting when conducting Allied Health Projects. Strategic Data Pty Ltd has been contracted to supply a secure web based data capture system for the minimum data set. The system is also customizable to capture extra items for a particular Division or group of Divisions. A number of standard reports will be available within the system; these will be defined in collaboration with the Divisions. In addition the data entered into the system will be downloadable in Excel and CSV format for use at the local level. It should be noted that only data entered by a particular Division would be available to that Division. The access is restricted based on a user name and password. If you have questions regarding the data base please send E-mail to [support@strategicdata.com.au](mailto:support@strategicdata.com.au)
5. Are there additional elements that you would like to capture in your local evaluation that may not be included in what the CDHA requires? Given that local Projects are operating under different models and within different contexts, there may be additional elements that may not be covered by the requirements of CDHA.
6. How should a local evaluation be conducted? Divisions will have differing levels of expertise regarding evaluation. You should consider what sort of evaluation methodology you would have to use to provide the required information to the CDHA.
7. Initially in Round 1 there were 15 Pilots followed by 13 Projects. Round 2 now involves 41 new service projects.

## WHO TO CONTACT?

Belinda Morley and Fay Kohn are Research Fellows at the CHPE. Both have expertise in evaluation and experience in working with Divisions, and are available to answer general evaluation questions. Divisions in Victoria can contact Belinda at [bcmorley@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:bcmorley@unimelb.edu.au) Divisions in NSW, QLD, NT, WA and TAS can contact Fay at [fkohn@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:fkohn@unimelb.edu.au)