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INDIGENOUS ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY FAILS ANOTHER TEST

After five years and \$4.8 billion dollars, a new Auditor General's [report](#) has revealed the Liberals and Nationals still can't say whether their Indigenous Advancement Strategy is working.

Serious questions about the administration of the IAS have been swirling for years. Funding decisions have been notoriously opaque and the effectiveness of many programs is unclear.

This new report confirms the IAS has been operating for years without proper evaluation processes. Despite the former Minister being warned by his Department in 2016:

“At some point the current situation will become untenable as it is not sustainable to continue to fund activities that lack a good evidence base.”

[ANAO Report, p21, 2019]

The new report also found:

- “substantial delays” in the development of an evaluation framework;
- A lack of a “reliable methodology for measuring outcomes”; and
- A failure to link evaluation to major policy objectives, such as Closing the Gap.

This comes on top of a damning [investigation](#) two years ago where the Auditor General found the IAS was failing basic standards of administration.

This included failing to assess applications against guidelines, failing to keep records of key decisions and failing to establish performance targets for funded projects.

This is no way to manage billions of dollars of taxpayers money.

Indigenous Australians deserve better.

Particularly when this year’s Closing the Gap report showed five out of the seven targets are not on track.

The Government is establishing a new agency within the existing department to manage Indigenous programs – but it will take much more than a name change to fix the deep-seated problems with the IAS.

Indigenous polices and programs should be evidence based, transparent, locally driven, co-designed and effective.

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