



Mr Peter Harris AO
Chairman
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
Melbourne VIC 8003, Australia

Dear Mr Harris

Peter

Draft report on the National Education Evidence Base

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Productivity Commission's Draft report on the National Education Evidence Base, which was released in September 2016. We are pleased and supportive of all the recommendations. However, we would like to comment in relation to Chapters 3 and 6 and Appendixes B and C of the draft report, as they relate to the work of the AIHW.

Chapter 3 Gaps in education data and evidence

On page 88, this chapter makes reference to the potential indicators for social and emotional wellbeing, and that the AIHW recommended an indicator for children be based on the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ). We suggest that the Commission should note that in June 2016, the AIHW used the SDQ to report the proportion of children aged 4–12 years who were classified as 'abnormal' as part of the Children's Headline Indicators (see <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>>).

On page 94, under *Evidence on early childhood education and care*, this chapter mentions that the AIHW's *National Early Childhood Development Researchable Data Set* and that it is currently on hold awaiting further government resources. We suggest that the Commission recommend that the Australian Government capitalise on the AIHW's previous work, and provide appropriate resources to continue this work. Note that a longitudinal linkage project was recommended by the Commission in a previous inquiry (Childcare and Early Childhood Learning, No 73, 31 October 2014), including building on previous work by states and territories.

Chapter 6: Data linkage

On page 159, under *Nature of current data linkage arrangements*, this chapter describes the cost recovery approach applied by the AIHW for the provision of data linkage services. Although linkage services are provided on a cost recovery basis that is "*essentially the cost of a salary plus the overheads associated with running buildings*", it may be useful to note that this should be considered at a level below full cost recovery. There are additional costs associated with linkage activities that are generally not included in this project-by-project cost recovery model. These include establishing infrastructure relating to linkage activities associated with new collections and maintaining and managing capabilities associated with running an accredited integrating authority.

Appendix B, Data quality issues, and data and evidence gaps

On page 206, in *Table B.1: Education data quality issues*, we would appreciate mention of the AIHW under a heading for 'Accuracy' for the NECECC specific collection of *ECEC data* as follows. Our submission (pages 12–13) refers to data standards, which are also mentioned on page 160 of the draft report.

| Topic | Quality issue | Submission |
|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Early childhood education and care data | | |
| Specific collections | | |
| National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection | Accuracy | AIHW (sub. 55); see also page 160 |

On page 209, in *Table B.2: Education data gaps*, we would appreciate mention of the AIHW under both the 'Cognitive' and 'Non-cognitive' headings for *Early learning outcomes* as follows. Our submission gives details of our publication, *Literature review of the impact of early childhood education and care on learning and development* available at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129552947>>, which explores the evidence behind exposure and duration of quality early childhood education on cognitive and non-cognitive development.

| Topic | Submission |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Early learning | |
| Early learning outcomes | |
| Cognitive | AIHW (sub. 55) |
| Non-cognitive | AIHW (sub. 55) |

On page 211, in *Table B.3: Gaps in education evidence*, we would appreciate mention of the AIHW under the 'Quality' header for *Specific evidence about early childhood education and care*. Our submission refers to the AIHW's data standards work which is also mentioned in Box 3.2.

| Topic | Submission |
|--|---|
| Specific evidence about early childhood education and care | |
| Quality | AIHW (sub. 55); see also Box 3.2 on page 77 |

Appendix C, Australia's education data and evidence base

On page 219, under *Administrative census data on preschools and childcare*, we would appreciate mention of the AIHW and suggest an additional paragraph as follows.

As defined in the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2016 and 2017, the NECECC is underpinned by data standards specified in the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set, which is maintained by the AIHW in the online metadata registry, METeOR, available at

<<http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/602243>>.

Under the section on *National early childhood education and care collections* which commences on page 217, we suggest the inclusion of an additional subsection relating to *Performance Indicators*, as we would appreciate mention of Children's Headline Indicators in additional paragraphs as follows.

The Children's Headline Indicators (CHI) are 19 indicators endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Conference, Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference and the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee. The CHI are published annually via the CHI web portal (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>), with 18 indicators currently reported. There are 5 indicators which contain education data:

- [Early childhood education](#) uses NECECC data and is available at
<http://analytics.aihw.gov.au/Viewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=%2FAIHW%2FReleasedPublic%2FCHI%2FReports&reportName=Early%20childhood%20education&reportViewOnly=true&viewerMode=modern&appSwitcherDisabled=true>
- [Transition to primary school](#) uses AEDC and is available at
<http://analytics.aihw.gov.au/Viewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=%2FAIHW%2FReleasedPublic%2FCHI%2FReports&reportName=Transition%20to%20primary%20school&reportViewOnly=true&viewerMode=modern&appSwitcherDisabled=true>
- [Attendance at primary school](#) is a relatively new indicator, that uses ACARA data and is available at
<http://analytics.aihw.gov.au/Viewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=%2FAIHW%2FReleasedPublic%2FCHI%2FReports&reportName=Attendance%20at%20primary%20school&reportViewOnly=true&viewerMode=modern&appSwitcherDisabled=true>
- [Literacy](#) uses NAPLAN data and is available at
<http://analytics.aihw.gov.au/Viewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=%2FAIHW%2FReleasedPublic%2FCHI%2FReports&reportName=Literacy&reportViewOnly=true&viewerMode=modern&appSwitcherDisabled=true>
- [Numeracy](#) uses NAPLAN data and is available at
<http://analytics.aihw.gov.au/Viewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=%2FAIHW%2FReleasedPublic%2FCHI%2FReports&reportName=Numeracy&reportViewOnly=true&viewerMode=modern&appSwitcherDisabled=true>

The development of indicators and frameworks are covered extensively in AIHW's report *Mapping of children and youth indicator reporting frameworks* which is available at <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129546858>> and is referenced in the AIHW's submission (AIHW sub. 55).

Should you have any queries about these comments, please contact Dr Fadwa Al-Yaman, Head, Indigenous and Children's Group,

Yours sincerely

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8 October 2016