

# **Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information**

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## Preface

In the interest of improving housing for Indigenous Australians, governments and other key stakeholders across Australia acknowledge the importance of consistent, accurate, reliable and timely housing information.

The commitment to an Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information (ANIHI) recognises the need for such information. The ANIHI came into effect in December 1999.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, as a Party to the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information and as Secretariat to its Committees, has published this booklet to inform community discussion and debate and promote the aims and objectives of the Agreement.

This booklet includes the Agreement as signed by the Parties and the Business Rules for the operations of the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee and Subcommittees as at 30 June 2000.

Note: This publication is also available online at [aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au).

Parties to the Agreement at 30 June 2000 were:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- Aboriginal Housing Office (New South Wales)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
- Department of Housing (Northern Territory)
- Department of Housing (Queensland)
- Department of Human Services (South Australia)
- Department of Urban Services (ACT)
- Ministry of Housing (WA)
- Torres Strait Regional Authority





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## Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information

### 1. Preamble

- 1.1 This Agreement is an initiative of the Housing Ministers' Reform Agenda for Indigenous housing (1997). Information collected under the Agreement will inform the development of strategies to improve Indigenous Housing Information at the national level and improve access to quality information to those who are providing or receiving housing assistance.
- 1.2 This Agreement will also maintain and protect data confidentiality, facilitate the use of data, and protect the rights of signatories in relation to their data provided under this Agreement.
- 1.3 Information agreements similar to this Agreement (for example, the National Health Information Agreement and the National Community Services Information Agreement) support coordinated data development and standardisation. This enables the compilation of nationally relevant data from locally useful data. It reduces the respondent burden on data collectors and the reporting burden on data providers. Consequently, the operation of this Agreement will reduce the likelihood of unnecessary data collection and reporting activities (for example, duplication), and minimise data collection and reporting costs, although it is understood that some agencies may have additional short-term start-up costs.
- 1.4 The long-term goal of this Agreement is not only to have a workable means of obtaining nationally relevant Indigenous housing data, but to do so in a way that is compatible and consistent with other information initiatives in Australia that cover other housing data and other relevant health and community services data.



## 2. Scope

- 2.1 The Agreement seeks to provide a framework for information development that is nationally relevant and, wherever possible, assists the aspirations of individual jurisdictions or agencies to develop their own specific local objectives, service standards, data or performance indicators.
- 2.2 The Agreement therefore covers Indigenous Housing Information that:
- is obtained from data collected on, or aggregated to, a national level; or
  - has national coverage; or
  - will be useful for national planning, policy-making and analysis and at the same time assists the planning and policy-making needs of regions, States and Territories.
- 2.3 For the purposes of this Agreement, 'Indigenous housing information' is defined as data or derived information concerned with:
- the housing status and needs of Indigenous individuals, communities and the Indigenous population as a whole; and
  - the provision of housing and housing assistance services—either mainstream or targeted (whether publicly or privately administered)—directed towards Indigenous peoples, including information on the uses, costs and outcomes of services and programs, on the type, location and condition of housing stock, and on the resources required to establish, maintain or improve services and programs.

## 3. Aims

Through the establishment of an overall Indigenous Housing Information Management Strategy:

- 3.1 to improve the quality of, and access to, Indigenous housing information at the national level and at the same time maintain and protect the confidentiality of the data for individuals and for the signatories to the Agreement;



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- 3.2 to ensure that data collected from different sources across the country are consistent and compatible between the different collections;
  - 3.3 to improve the compatibility of Indigenous housing data with mainstream housing information and health and community services information; and
  - 3.4 to address in the first instance, through the provision of reliable, consistent data, the acknowledged priority areas, that is:
    - Indigenous housing need;
    - viability of Indigenous housing organisations;
    - sustainable and healthy housing; and
    - delivery of improved housing outcomes.

## 4. Objectives

### Framework

- 4.1 To provide a framework to facilitate, coordinate, plan, manage and develop priorities for national information developments, in order to:
  - identify gaps and weaknesses in the information already available;
  - work out priorities for data development which keep data and data development relevant to policy and program development; and, as an ancillary
  - facilitate data collection to meet specific local objectives where this is compatible with national requirements.
- 4.2 To create a work program based on established priorities to:
  - develop agreed national uniform data definitions;
  - develop an agreed national minimum data set;
  - coordinate data developments in both government and non-government agencies; and



- reduce duplication of data development and collection by coordination with mainstream housing and other human services sectors.

## Process

- 4.3 To provide a structure for developing standards, uniform definitions, classifications and collection protocols for Indigenous housing data. The structure gives the means to:
- improve existing data; and
  - ensure that Indigenous housing data collections can stay as separate collections and still be consistent and comparable between themselves.
- 4.4 To develop definitions relevant to national Indigenous housing for inclusion in a National Housing Data Dictionary compatible with national data dictionaries in other relevant sectors.
- 4.5 To promote long-term commitment to major special-purpose collections to obtain essential information unable to be obtained from administrative data sources.

## Access

- 4.6 To improve access to and sharing of consistent and timely information between all levels of government, agencies who provide resources, service providers and consumers. At the same time, to ensure that the appropriate privacy and confidentiality requirements of individuals and of signatories are met.

## Improved reporting and dissemination

- 4.7 To ensure that national information is made readily available.
- 4.8 To provide feedback on information to those agencies providing data.



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## Sector development

- 4.9 To provide data collectors with the means for self-management of information effectively through:
- a structure for developing the appropriate skills in those who actually collect the data; and
  - material support for data collectors.

## Time frame

- 4.10 Within the first year of the Agreement:
- 4.10.1 to establish the operational structure and a working process for data development, together with a prototype National Minimum Data Set; and
- 4.10.2 to establish the communication process and requirements for sector development underpinning the national data collection.
- 4.11 Within two years:
- 4.11.1 to have an agreed National Minimum Data Set and supporting data definitions, procedure documents and guides to collection and use of housing data, which include measures of need; and
- 4.11.2 to establish a schedule for sector development to support national data collection.
- 4.12 Within three years:
- 4.12.1 to have agreement on the implementation schedule for the full National Minimum Data Set; and
- 4.12.2 to commence a review of the costs and benefits of the Agreement.
- 4.13 Within five years:
- 4.13.1 to have at least partial collection agreed and implemented; and



- 4.13.2 to have reviewed the costs and benefits of the Agreement and to have made recommendations for the future operation of the Agreement.

## 5. Operation of the Agreement

### Responsibility

- 5.1 This is a multilateral agreement between the signatories to the Agreement. Signatories may be either *Parties* to the Agreement or *Partners* in the Agreement:
- Parties are agencies with direct responsibility to a Minister (Commonwealth or State) for Indigenous housing assistance resources, or with direct responsibility to a Commonwealth minister for national Indigenous housing statistics;
  - Partners may be any other agencies with a direct involvement in housing assistance data collection.
- 5.2 The Agreement operates under the auspices of the Parties. Decisions under the Agreement are the collective responsibility of the Parties acting together (the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum).
- 5.3 Agencies may become Partners with the agreement of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum. Partners will agree in writing to the terms of this Agreement. They will have the same rights and obligations, and are eligible for all the benefits of Parties, other than membership of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.
- 5.4 The National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum is responsible for constituting an implementation committee (the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee) to which it may delegate some decision-making (but not those related to allocation of funds by the Parties).



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- 5.5 A National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee will be responsible to the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum for the overall operation of the Agreement.
- 5.6 The operations and procedures of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum and the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee are set out in Schedule A.

### **Roles and responsibilities of signatories**

- 5.7 **All signatories (Parties and Partners)**  
Each signatory has responsibilities under this Agreement only within the limits of its jurisdiction. In the context of this Agreement, such jurisdiction covers data collection only within the scope of their administrative control and/or for which they have administrative responsibility for resource allocation. Each signatory will, within the limits of its jurisdiction:
- 5.7.1 collect data for national purposes under the authority of this Agreement, using agreed standard guidelines and consistent processes and formats, in order that the data will be timely and of appropriate quality;
  - 5.7.2 maintain and provide information in accordance with agreed purposes and the agreed National Minimum Data Set;
  - 5.7.3 use national definitions and data standards as endorsed under this Agreement in the collection, maintenance and analysis of data, and to ensure that information is capable of national comparison;
  - 5.7.4 collect, maintain and disseminate information according to statistical and ethical standards and guidelines so that the privacy provisions of the Agreement are observed;
  - 5.7.5 maintain the information collected under the Agreement so that it can be readily made available, subject to the conditions of this Agreement, to individuals, groups and



authorities for purposes which require access to national Indigenous Housing Information kept under the Agreement; and

5.7.6 retain responsibility for the quality and completeness of contributed data provided for national purposes.

#### 5.8 **Parties**

In addition to the responsibilities of all signatories stated in s5.7, Parties will:

5.8.1 provide representation on the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee (note: this is optional for Partners); and

5.8.2 sponsor (that is, act as the agency responsible for), as and when agreed, specific projects addressing the objectives of this Agreement.

#### 5.9 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**

In addition to the responsibilities of all Parties stated in ss5.7–5.8, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare will:

5.9.1 provide the secretariat (the ‘Agreement Secretariat’) for the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum and the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee;

5.9.2 assist and advise other signatories in the use and interpretation of national Indigenous Housing Information;

5.9.3 ensure that quality control standards are maintained and enhanced as agreed under this Agreement in order to encourage accuracy and consistency in the collection and reporting of Indigenous housing data; and

5.9.4 collate and maintain nationally relevant data (other than from censuses and surveys) collected under this Agreement.

#### 5.10 **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

In addition to the responsibilities of all Parties stated in ss5.7–5.8, the Australian Bureau of Statistics will:



- 5.10.1 develop statistical standards relevant to Indigenous data collections;
- 5.10.2 provide specialist advice in relation to statistics to other signatories;
- 5.10.3 assist and advise other signatories in the use and interpretation of national Indigenous Housing Information;
- 5.10.4 ensure that quality control standards are maintained and enhanced as agreed under this Agreement, in order to encourage accuracy and consistency in the collection and reporting of Indigenous housing data; and
- 5.10.5 facilitate, together with other Parties, the review and development of Indigenous data collections.

### **Consultation**

- 5.11 The National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee will consult with and participate in consultations with:
  - 5.11.1 agencies providing, collecting and using data and Indigenous Housing Information whose activities may be influenced by the processes of this Agreement;
  - 5.11.2 representatives of consumer groups and service providers, from government and non-government organisations, on setting information priorities for Indigenous housing and on action to meet them;
  - 5.11.3 agencies not represented on the implementation group in respect of decisions affecting those agencies; and
  - 5.11.4 other relevant parties as required.

### **Funding**

- 5.12 Notwithstanding the broad range of the framework and coverage, it is recognised that the data development required to implement



the Agreement incurs a cost. Nevertheless, it is to be understood that there is no commitment of any specific amount of funding for implementation projects under this Agreement prior to the establishment of an agreed development and implementation plan and associated work program (these will constitute the first stage of work under the Agreement).

- 5.13 Subject to the provision in 5.12, the responsibility for funding the implementation of actions agreed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum is with the Parties to the Agreement. Arrangements between Parties or between Parties, Partners and other bodies are not excluded, but it is expected that generally, Parties will be responsible for their own implementation costs.
- 5.14 Proposals for additional funding may be developed where there is national benefit, and a source of funding can be identified. Thus, funding may be sought under the Agreement where work on specific Indigenous Housing Information issues imposes additional costs on a particular Party, where there are economies of scale to be gained, or where joint action of the Parties is an effective and efficient way to meet the objectives of the Agreement.
- 5.15 Any income generated through the operation of the Agreement will be applied to the purposes of the Agreement.

### **Duration of the Agreement**

- 5.16 The Agreement will operate for the five years from 1 November 1999 and, after review, for a further period as agreed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.
- 5.17 The National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum will arrange for a review and evaluation of the costs and benefits of the Agreement to be completed by the end of the third year of the Agreement.



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## Variation to the Agreement

- 5.18 The Agreement may be amended at any time by agreement of all the Parties to the Agreement.
- 5.19 A signatory proposing to withdraw should give reasonable notice. Reasonable notice is considered as sufficient time to finalise undertakings made under the Agreement. If a Party or Partner withdraws, the Agreement will continue to operate in respect of all other Parties and Partners.

## Termination of the Agreement

- 5.20 The Agreement may be terminated at any time by the agreement of all Parties to the Agreement.

## 6. Context of the Agreement

### Relationships with other sectors

- 6.1 It is acknowledged that:
- Indigenous housing cuts across a range of other sectors such as community services, health, education, social security and labour market services;
  - Indigenous housing has important connections with mainstream housing on one hand and with other activities directed specifically to Indigenous people; and
  - the complex administrative and funding relationships mean that it is not always easy to separate 'Indigenous housing' from other areas.
- 6.2 By acknowledging these associations, duplication or overlap of effort can be identified and avoided, and consistency encouraged. Close collaboration is therefore needed:
- within the Indigenous housing sector;
  - with other Indigenous information development initiatives; and



- with mainstream housing, health, community services and other areas.
- 6.3 Wherever possible, compatibility of data definitions, standards and collection methods with those of other relevant sectors will be sought.

### **Existing arrangements and agreements**

- 6.4 The Agreement subsumes, but does not replace, previous arrangements and agreements between the signatories with respect to the subject matter of this Agreement.
- 6.5 S6.4 notwithstanding, in the case of the National Housing Data Agreement this Agreement recognises the necessity of data consistency between the two Agreements. For data specifications concerned directly with Indigenous data, this Agreement will take the lead role. Where data specifications have general application, the National Housing Data Agreement will take the lead role.
- 6.6 What is currently required under other arrangements may be inconsistent with what is decided under this Agreement. If this happens:
- 6.6.1 signatories will work to remove the inconsistency, in consultation with those affected; and
  - 6.6.2 the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum will take responsibility for negotiating protection for implementation timetables agreed under this Agreement where there is incompatibility.
- 6.7 The cost recovery policy of each of the contributing Parties will be made explicit in respect of implementation activities agreed to by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.



## Collection and maintenance of information

- 6.8 It is intended that national Indigenous Housing Information will be based where possible on data available from administrative data collections. Where appropriate, data from censuses or surveys of the Indigenous Australian population will be used as well as administrative data contributed by the Parties, their agents, or other agencies.
- 6.9 This Agreement will apply (appropriately to data development, collection and management) the principles of Recommendation 51 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, as agreed by all Australian Governments, namely:
- ‘That research funding bodies reviewing proposals for further research on programs and policies affecting Aboriginal people adopt as principle criteria for the funding of those programs:*
- (a) the extent to which the problem or process being investigated has been defined by Aboriginal people of the relevant community or group;*
  - (b) the extent to which Aboriginal people from the relevant community or group have substantial control over the conduct of the research;*
  - (c) the requirement that Aboriginal people from the relevant community or group receive the results of the research delivered in a form which can be understood by them; and*
  - (d) the requirement that the research include the formulation of proposals for further action by the Aboriginal community and local Aboriginal organisations.’<sup>1</sup>*
- 6.10 Parties will release information collected and maintained under the Agreement in a way consistent with national protocols, definitions and standards agreed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.

<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Response by Governments to the Royal Commission. Volume 1: p 167. Canberra: AGPS, 1992.



- 6.11 The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare will collate national data which is not collected by national surveys or censuses. Parties will provide the data following assessment of quality by the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee, and in a form which meets the requirements of the particular collection.

### **Privacy of individuals and organisations**

- 6.12 All signatories will respect the rights to privacy of any person or organisation named or otherwise identified in any information source.
- 6.13 Information will be collected, disseminated, used and secured in such a way as to protect the privacy and confidentiality of any individual to whom, and/or organisation to which, it may refer. In particular, signatories will comply with established ethical guidelines and practices.
- 6.14 The signatories acknowledge that data collectors and holders will comply with the provisions of the Commonwealth's *Privacy Act 1988* as amended, and any other Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation relevant to the confidentiality or privacy of the data. In particular, signatories will take into account the privacy provisions contained in:
- 6.14.1 the Privacy Protocol for Commonwealth Agencies in the Northern Territory Handling Personal Information of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People;<sup>2</sup>
  - 6.14.2 the New South Wales Aboriginal health information Memorandum of Understanding;<sup>3</sup> and
  - 6.14.3 other Commonwealth or State and Territory privacy provisions that may come into force during the existence of the Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Privacy Commissioner. *Minding our own business. Privacy protocol for Commonwealth agencies in the Northern Territory handling personal information of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.* Canberra: Office of the Privacy Commissioner, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> New South Wales Aboriginal health information Memorandum of Understanding. Aboriginal Health Research Cooperative and the NSW Department of Health, 1998.



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- 6.15 The concerns of individuals who are members of small community groups regarding privacy are acknowledged and advice on such concerns will be sought from appropriate authorities.
  - 6.16 When individual data sets are too small for protection of privacy and/or reliable interpretation, linked data sets or other data sets may be used to contribute derived data.
  - 6.17 Data will be linked only in accordance with legislation and agreed privacy and ethical guidelines.

### **Ownership and dissemination of information**

- 6.18 Unless in the public domain, data provided by a Party for national purposes will be used only with consent of the Party providing the data under this Agreement.
- 6.19 Parties may also have custodial roles in respect of data they receive from and manage for other collecting bodies. If this is the case, Parties are to apply the provisions of this Agreement to those data collections.
- 6.20 Any transfer or storage of data for national collections will be in a manner that prevents unauthorised access.
- 6.21 Notwithstanding s6.22, national Indigenous Housing Information will be made available nationally to all levels of the Indigenous housing sector, and where appropriate, to other areas. Access will be in accordance with applicable legislation and to agreed ethical and privacy considerations.
- 6.22 Information will be disseminated in accordance with agreed national protocols, definitions and standards.
- 6.23 Users of data released into the public domain will be required to reference the original source of data.



## Standards for information

- 6.24 All Parties will cooperate in the development and ongoing review of definitions relevant to Indigenous housing information to be included in a National Housing Data Dictionary. The dictionary will set out agreed data definitions, classifications and standards. It will be the ongoing authoritative source of national Indigenous housing data definitions.
- 6.25 Subject to the coordinated approach required under s6.8 and the complementary provision within the National Housing Data Agreement, data standards adopted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and authoritative international organisations will be used unless an alternative is specified under this Agreement.
- 6.26 All Parties will comply with and use the agreed definitions and standards as specified in the National Housing Data Dictionary for data collected for the purpose of national information collections. This covers validity, format, completeness and timeliness standards.
- 6.27 Consistency between definitions relevant to Indigenous housing in the National Housing Data Dictionary and other relevant national data dictionaries will be sought, in order to increase data compatibility between sectors.

## 7. Implementation of the Agreement

- 7.1 The implementation of the Agreement and implementation and development of related structures and processes will be the responsibility of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.
- 7.2 The National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee will oversee the development of data definitions and standards, an ongoing data dictionary and national minimum data set, as directed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.



- 7.3 The National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee will include:
- representatives of signatories—Parties agree to provide representatives under section 5.8, Partners may be represented at their own discretion;
  - a Chair, appointed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum from among its members, for a two-year period;
  - representatives of Indigenous agencies with a role in the coordination and use of Indigenous housing information, including Indigenous housing service providers, subject to the agreement of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum;
  - representatives of State, Territory, Commonwealth or regional Indigenous housing authorities not party to the Agreement, subject to the agreement of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum.
- 7.4 The Business Rules or terms of reference for the implementation group will be as agreed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum (see Schedule A).
- 7.5 Arrangements for costs of participation in the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee will be the responsibility of the individual participants.

## **8. Commencement of the Agreement**

The Agreement will start from 1 November 1999.



## Signatories

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission  
Mr Mark Sullivan (Chief Executive Officer)

Aboriginal Housing Office (New South Wales)  
Mr James Christian (Chief Executive Officer)

Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Ms Barbara Dunlop (First Assistant Statistician)

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Dr Richard Madden (Director)

Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services  
Mr Jeff Whalan (Deputy Secretary)

Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)  
Mr John Ramsay (Secretary)

Department of Housing (Northern Territory)  
Mr G Symons (Chief Executive Officer)

Department of Housing (Queensland)  
Ms Linda Apelt (Director-General)

Department of Human Services (South Australia)  
Ms Christine Charles (Chief Executive)

Department of Human Services (Victoria)  
Mr Howard Ronaldson (Director of Housing)

Department of Urban Services (Australian Capital Territory)  
Mr Alan Thompson (Chief Executive)

Ministry of Housing (Western Australia)  
Mr Greg Joyce (Managing Director)

Torres Strait Regional Authority  
Mr John Abednego (Chairperson)



## **Schedule A**

# **Procedures for the operation of the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information**

**Guidelines to the operations, structure and processes for implementing  
the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information**



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## Infrastructure

The standing bodies for the operation of the Agreement are the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum (NIHIMF) and its advisory committee, the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee (NIHIIC), supported by the Agreement Secretariat.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare provides the Agreement Secretariat. The Secretariat is responsible for providing timely and effective organisational support to the Forum, the Committee and the Chairs, including:

- acting as a focal point for information and advice on meeting processes and requirements for submissions;
- coordination and dissemination of meeting agendas and supporting papers;
- minute-taking and dissemination; and
- coordination of follow-up action arising from meetings.

## National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum

### Members

Members comprise the heads of agencies which are Parties (or their delegates).

### Chair

The Chair is elected by the members for a two-year period.



## Responsibilities of the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum

The NIHIMF is responsible for:

- overseeing the direction, development, review and implementation of the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information;
- overseeing the role and function of the NIHIIC; and
- considering recommendations forwarded by NIHIIC.

NIHIMF will meet at least once annually, with the last meeting in a calendar year generally in November. The November meeting will consider changes or additions to the National Minimum Data Set(s) or Data Dictionary.

Where necessary, business can be considered out of session by mail, electronically, or by teleconference.

Forum members will meet their own participation costs.



Figure 1: Flow chart for NIHIMF meetings



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## Meeting procedures

### Submissions to the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum

Matters for consideration by the Forum may be raised by members or are submitted through the NIHIIC. Such matters will be in the form of a proposal with a recommendation from the NIHIIC. External agencies with matters they wish to raise with the Forum must do so through the NIHIIC.

Where external bodies require advice about matters to be brought to the attention of the Forum, they can request procedural assistance from the Agreement Secretariat.

#### Timelines

Submissions and papers for consideration by the NIHIMF are to be lodged with the Secretariat at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. If they are to be considered at a scheduled meeting, they must be lodged at least 15 working days prior to the meeting.

The agenda and accompanying papers are to be despatched by the Secretariat to Forum members 10 working days prior to the scheduled meeting.

The draft report and action list are to be prepared and, subject to the approval of the Forum Chair, despatched to all members within 10 working days of the meeting.

The report will be finalised as soon as possible after the meeting, so that requests for action and decisions taken can be forwarded to the NIHIIC.

### Format for submissions to the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee

Submissions and papers for NIHIIC meetings are to be made using a standard format agreed by the Forum, and providing information as required by the Forum.



## National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee

### Members

- Each Party to the Agreement will provide a representative.
- Any State, Territory, Commonwealth or regional Indigenous housing authority affiliated with the Agreement may be represented.
- Indigenous agencies with a role in the coordination and use of Indigenous Housing Information, including Indigenous housing service providers who are affiliated with the Agreement may be represented.
- Representation will be invited from three non-government Indigenous organisations.
- Where similar groups with common purpose exist (such as under the National Housing Data Agreement) cross-membership should be encouraged.

### Chair

The Chair is appointed by the National Indigenous Housing Information Management Forum. When a companion group is established for the National Housing Data Agreement, the Chair should seek to be a member of that Group.

### Responsibilities of the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee

The NIHIC is responsible for:

- making recommendations to the NIHIMF on:
  - the development, review and implementation of the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information;



- 
- data definitions, concepts and standards and their inclusion in a National Data Dictionary and/or National Minimum Data Sets.
  - national Indigenous housing information priorities, work programs, funding implications and other policy issues;
- overseeing the review and maintenance of the National Minimum Data Set(s) on Indigenous housing and its supporting Data Dictionary entries;
  - promoting and facilitating the sharing of information about developments in national Indigenous housing information and developing cooperative working arrangements within existing Indigenous housing processes and structures;
  - consulting with relevant reference groups and individuals, including the non-government sector and consumers, on national Indigenous housing information issues;
  - negotiating with other groups and individuals for the collection and dissemination of information which will enhance the provision of housing assistance to Indigenous people;
  - developing and fostering a cooperative working relationship with other national information management groups, with particular emphasis on scope for integration or collaboration of activities with mainstream housing and with other Indigenous areas;
  - promoting consistency with other relevant data development activities and publications such as in mainstream housing, Indigenous statistics, community services and health;
  - establishing and overseeing ad hoc sub-committees or working groups to consider matters requiring special expertise or knowledge or otherwise set up under the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information.

The NIHIIC will hold meetings at least twice yearly, with one meeting scheduled around six weeks before the scheduled NIHIMF meeting. Where necessary, urgent business can be considered out of session by mail, electronically, or by teleconference.



It is the responsibility of representatives to make arrangements for the cost of their participation in meetings.

## Decision-making

Technical (data) issues will normally be considered first by a subcommittee or working group comprising members with relevant expertise (and possibly co-opted individuals with relevant expertise). When a consensus decision cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics for a recommendation to the NIHIIC. Where the NIHIIC is unable to resolve a contentious decision, it will refer to the NIHIMF as the final arbiter.

The Committee may decide to accept proposals for new or revised data definitions and recommend to the Forum that they be included in the next version of the Data Dictionary.

The Committee may decide that more work needs to be done on the data element definitions but that the draft definitions are suitable candidates for inclusion in the Data Dictionary and should be made accessible to all those working in the field.



Figure 2: Flow chart for NIHIIC meetings



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The Committee may decide that although the data elements are not appropriate for national application, the work is of interest and relevance to others in the national Indigenous housing information field. The Committee may recommend that the data elements are included in an appendix to the Data Dictionary so that the definitions are available to a wider audience.

## **Meeting procedures**

### **Submissions to the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee**

Matters for consideration by the NIHIIC are submitted by members or as reports from subcommittees or working groups delegated to consider matters in detail. This includes, for example, items to be considered for inclusion in the Data Dictionary. External agencies may raise matters through one of the members of the Committee. Where external bodies require advice about matters to be brought to the attention of the NIHIIC, they can request procedural assistance from the Agreement Secretariat. The NIHIMF may also refer matters to the NIHIIC for advice.

#### **Timeline for meetings**

Submissions and papers for consideration by the NIHIIC are to be lodged with the Secretariat at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. If they are to be considered at a scheduled meeting, they must be lodged at least 15 working days prior to the meeting.

The Agenda and accompanying papers are to be despatched by the Secretariat to Committee members 10 working days prior to the scheduled meeting.

An action list is to be prepared and circulated within two days of the meeting. The draft report is to be prepared and, subject to the approval of the Forum Chair, despatched to all members within 10 working days of the meeting. The report will also be forwarded to members of the NIHIMF.



### **Format for submissions to the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee**

Submissions and papers for NIHIIC meetings are to be made using a standard format determined by the Committee and made available in electronic form from the Secretariat. Submissions proposing new or revised data definitions require more detailed information to be considered by the NIHIIC. This more detailed information is to be provided as an attachment to the agenda paper and should follow the format and include any information required by the Committee.

### **Meeting alternatives**

At times the quantity and complexity of material to be considered by the Committee during face-to-face meetings is too great, or timeliness requires a rapid response. The Committee has several options for pursuing matters out of session:

- establishing time-limited and subject-specific ad hoc technical working groups to consider issues in more detail and report back to the Committee with recommendations (which may then be finalised by teleconference or other means out of session);
- authorising the Secretariat to take specified actions based on the outcomes of a defined consultation process; and
- referring back to the author or organisation originating the submission for specified further work.

## **Procedures for the establishment and operation of technical working groups**

### **Terms of reference**

The NIHIIC will establish terms of reference for each working group, setting out:

- the context of the task of the group;
- the issue(s) to be addressed;
- the task of that group;



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- the extent and level of consultation considered necessary; and
  - the milestones and reporting deadlines.

### **Convenor**

To be specified by the NIHIIC.

### **Role and responsibilities of the convenor**

The convenor will be responsible for the operation of the working group, its progress and reporting including:

- arranging for working group meetings or other operational issues;
- maintaining records of meetings and their distribution to working group members and to the Agreement Secretariat;
- meeting the working group's work plan, consultation and reporting requirements mentioned above.

### **Membership**

To be specified by the NIHIIC or agreed by the Committee after consultation with the convenor. Individuals may be co-opted to provide expert advice as required.

### **Work plan**

Each working group will develop and submit to the Agreement Secretariat for endorsement by the NIHIIC, a program outline including terms of reference, work plan, milestones, timelines, and reporting time frames.

### **Consultation requirements**

Each working group will set up agreed consultation with all other parties to ensure the national nature of the project is maintained (to this end the convenor may invite participation from representatives of other Indigenous housing interests, including the community, private sector and non-government organisations).



## Reporting requirements

Progress and meeting reports are to be provided to the NIHIIC within the agreed time frame and should use the NIHIIC submission format.

## Financial arrangements

Individual members involved in working groups must meet their own costs of participation. Arrangements for invited participants who are not in government employment or not entitled to reimbursement of costs must be agreed in advance by the NIHIIC if financial support is sought. Travel under these circumstances must be coordinated through the Agreement Secretariat.

## The NIHIIC Business Plan

The NIHIIC works to a Business Plan that documents the strategies employed by the Committee (and endorsed by the NIHIMF) to fulfil the Committee's responsibilities.

## The NIHIIC work program

The NIHIIC's work program is to be a rolling triennial work program of national Indigenous housing information projects endorsed by the NIHIMF.

The Committee's work program is governed by:

- directions from the NIHIMF;
- identified national Indigenous Housing Information priorities;
- the degree of importance placed on a project or submission by the jurisdictions represented on the Committee; and
- the timing of submissions (all other matters being equal, submissions are attended to in order of receipt).

Inclusion of a project in the work program will indicate that work is either currently in progress on that project or will be commenced during the time frame of the work program. The Committee's annual work program will be established in February each year and endorsed by the NIHIMF.



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The Committee's work is focused primarily on the endorsement and revision of National Indigenous Housing Minimum Data Set(s) and the maintenance, revision and development of data concepts, definitions and standards for Indigenous housing (in a form suitable for inclusion in a National Housing Data Dictionary). These two areas of responsibility overlap but involve some differences in decision-making processes that relate to the different nature and purpose of the Dictionary and the National Minimum Data Set(s).

The Committee will review the National Minimum Data Set(s) and Data Dictionary entries on an annual basis, ensuring sufficient time for decisions to be made by the NIHIMF, finalisation of data element definitions and adequate lead time for implementation in jurisdictions.

The Committee's recommendations for changes or additions to the National Minimum Data Set or Data Dictionary entries are generally decided at the last NIHIIC meeting in the calendar year and submitted to the NIHIMF for endorsement at its November meeting. New and revised dictionary definitions usually have an implementation date of 1 July in the year following their endorsement.

The NIHIIC will not normally undertake data development work directly. It will draw on expert or working groups that auspice or undertake work on data elements and data sets that may serve as national standards. Such data development work may have been referred from the NIHIMF or may have emerged as part of a national policy or a cooperative information development project. The NIHIIC provides the channel through which standards emerging from nationally focused data development work are documented and endorsed by the NIHIMF, for implementation in national data collections. It is also the channel for making access to the development process more widely available to stakeholders in the national Indigenous housing information arena.



