

**0016**

**Giving people a voice: Enabling disadvantaged groups to be heard through evaluation**

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The presenters will facilitate an exploration of challenges and issues involved in conducting evaluations of projects, programs or services established for Indigenous or other disadvantaged groups. The presenters will open the session with a case study of an evaluation recently conducted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia that raised a number of key challenges and issues for them. The round table will consider the obligations of evaluators working with disadvantaged people and communities without large numbers of services and resources. It will give people the opportunity to share their experiences around similar evaluation challenges.

The record of the roundtable will provide the beginnings of a checklist of considerations for conducting evaluations taking into account informants' and stakeholders' sensibilities. It could also serve the purpose of clarifying evaluator's obligations when working with disadvantaged groups.

The roundtable will discuss

- Respecting and not harming informants and communities
- Understanding the culture within which the evaluation is being undertaken
- Establishing effective relationships
- Giving people a voice and providing opportunities for disadvantaged stakeholders to influence projects, programs and services
- Identifying evaluator's obligations to represent the views and aspirations of disenfranchised peoples
- Working with and building the skills of people with limited experience of research and evaluation processes
- Balancing sensitivities to and recognition of informants priorities and knowledge with meeting the requirements of the evaluation funders
- Identifying the benefits and risks of providing information for an evaluation
- Developing a communication strategy to 'keep everyone in the loop'
- Managing the potential tension between government priorities and individual or community expectations and aspirations