



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



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**Measuring our influence in
protecting human rights**

Outline

- Who we are
- The influence we seek
 - Role of advocacy
 - Our advocacy goals, strategies, tools
- Measuring the influence of advocacy
 - What the literature says
 - Theory of change
 - Our approach
- Examples of our model in action
- Implications & learning

Commission snapshot

What are human rights?

- Laws and systems/UN International/national treaties & covenants
- Principles and ideals

We are 2 organisations:

- National Human Rights Institution-Independent statutory
- Public service agency, a small one (120 staff) small budget

Our role

- Human rights lens to rights issues...racism, gender & Indigenous inequality, discrimination based violence, asylum seeker policy, ageism, disability access...

Our work

- Influencing national agendas
- Building human rights into Australian policy, law & practice
- Resolving discrimination & human rights complaints
- Monitoring and reporting
- Engaging internationally

Our strategic goals

Goal 3 Leadership and influence

We are a respected and influential advocate for human rights

Results

Our work influences the development of law, policy and practice.

Indicators

Our advocacy recommendations are increasingly reflected in positions on human rights issues across the community and government.

Our advocacy

- Range of activities used to influence decision makers
- Systemic focus, non-partisan, unique HR lens
- Strategies use our functions, mandates, strengths
 - Research, consultations, monitoring
 - Engagement, partnerships, coalitions
 - Reports [7], submissions [30], inquiries [1], speeches [159], legal interventions (jurisprudence) [8]
 - All on public record → accountability process
- Direct & indirect
- Targets: governments, civil society, NGOs, communities
- To date no systematic evaluation of impact!
- Success stories to be told e.g. CTG, children in detention

Advocacy evaluation in the literature

‘evaluating policy influencing activities...will never be simple enough to be amenable to statistical methods’

Jones 2011

Challenging!

- Complex context
- Responsive, flexible, in the moment decision making
- Long term outcomes, multiple strategies & influences
- Needs focus on progress indicators
- Attribution (proof) vs. contribution (likely influence/causation) issues
- Hard to measure, portfolio of data needed.

Centre for evaluation innovation, 2011 & 2011 Teles & Schmitt, Klugman 2010, 2009 Fagen et al 2009, California Endowment 2009 & 2005, Stachowiak (no date), Chapman & Wameyo 2001, Patton 2008, O’Flynn 2009,..

Our response to the literature

- Inferred causation [influence] is still valuable evidence
- Influence seems measurable
 - Ask observers
 - Check if ‘content’ matches outcome
 - Look for tell tale patterns
 - Does timing of outcome make sense
 - Does ‘dose’ relate to the response
 - Identify/check underlying/ assumed causal mechanism

Davidson 2000 & 2005

- Indicators looked familiar
- Mixed method principles supports hard to measure

Harvard Family Research Project 2009, Jones 2011, 2005, Piggot-Irvine 2008, Creswell & Plano 2011

A few key points

- Change from practitioner wisdom → systematic evaluation
- Quiet achiever culture of Commission
- What would success look like in our context?
- Interrogated theory of change/logic needed
 - Examine assumptions
 - Advocacy contribution=influence
 - What influences decision makers?
 - Contribution pathways unique to Commission
- Indicators needed for our advocacy activities

Our basic TOC



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Need to simplify this to a few simple activities and outcomes

Margaret Scott, 26/08/12

Advocacy indicators-extract

Research and Consultation Reports	How much did we do? (Outputs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of: participants in the consultation/research activities, products and publications developed
	How well did we do it? (Process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered on time and to budget • Satisfaction by stakeholders/ with the engagement level/quality.
Commission Inquiries	Has anything changed as a result? (Outcomes)	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection of the Commission's recommendations in inquiry reports to govt.
Commission Submissions		<p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection of recommendations in the public commitments of decision makers • New terms introduced by report in materials of decision makers, stakeholders • Positive impact on stakeholder advocacy (use material in planning/advocacy) • Increased understanding and knowledge of issue among target audiences <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissions recs are implemented and monitored • Stakeholders identify the Commissions contribution, linking it to outcomes

Our approach

Portfolio of triangulated evidence from multiple sources

O'Flynn 2009

- Developing TOC/logic models backed up by literature
- Indicators developed
- Mixed methods/triangulation principles
- Stakeholder observations
 - KI interviews, surveys, focus groups
- Citation/recommendations analysis
- Change case studies
- Action research, structured staff review, feedback diaries
- Internally led, some external support
- Expert technical oversight

In action: 2 studies

- Ask observers
KI interviews, FGs, surveys, staff & stakeholders
- Check if 'content' matches outcome
Reflection of our reccs in strategic materials (public record)
- Look for tell tale patterns
Cited multiple levels
- Does timing of outcome make sense
Case stories, did we raise issue / visible over time
- Does 'dose' relate to the response
Sustained resourced programs
- Identify/check underlying/ assumed causal mechanisms
Lit review, comparison with other work, interrogated TOC

Note on Citation analysis design

*Look for extent to which research or advice is
visibly picked up*

Jones 2011

Method

- Sources vary e.g. parliamentary inquiries
- Citation rate of [our] submission in final inquiry reports
- Analyse reccs for a reflection of Commission position.
*[the court] embraced the argument advanced by the AHRC
(Case law judgement 2011)*
- Examine parliamentary records for citation/references in speeches
- Citation analysis of selected key politicians speeches

Note on Case study design

- New or changed policy case story
- Identified by external observers
- Cross reference with KI observations
- Identify if issue first raised by Commission
 - review milestones & Commission role
 - align with decision maker speeches etc.

Social Justice & Native Title Reports Program

- Long term
- Annual, 2 reports
- Legislative function
- Authority of Social Justice Commissioner
- Consultation, Community voice → themes
- Robust HR research → reports
- Tabled in parliament, public record, Govt. accountable
- Advocacy strategy

Evaluation: Social Justice & Native Title Reports Program

- Evaluation questions
 - To what extent are the reports valued by stakeholders?
 - What has been the impact on the policy landscape?
 - How can the impact be strengthened?
- Design
 - Online survey
 - Key informant interviews
 - Citation analysis
 - Policy change case study

Results: Online survey

- Constituency of 500
- 40% response rate
- Respondents data
 - 80% found them either useful/very useful
 - 52% used them for advocacy planning
 - 40% used them in submissions
- Respondent views

‘the reports provide great leadership in setting agendas’

‘They are the annual benchmark for Indigenous policy’

‘They have been vital on Close the Gap campaign’

Results: KI interviews.

- Senior level stakeholders (19)
- Telephone interviews (internal)
 - Their staff used reports for advocacy as a primary information source
 - Smaller # used for strategic focus or direction.
 - All identified the importance of the Commission voice
 - All acknowledged influence in agenda raising
 - Reports are not a stand alone influence

Key informant views

‘every issue that we work on has at some point been written about in either of those Reports’

‘Incredibly useful’ when setting agenda, policy direction and priorities’

‘constitutional reform would not have been on the agenda if it wasn’t for the work of the Commissioner and the Social Justice Report’

‘Reports are a launching pad for...debate’

Results, citation analysis & case study

- Cited up to Parliamentary debate (Hansard)
 - But limited
 - 2010 SJR → PM's Closing the Gap Address 2011, 9 Feb
- Significant citation at stakeholder/inquiry levels

Case study

- Constitutional reform – identified by KIs
- Role of the Commission evident
- Direct link from report recs to Gov't decisions

Immigration Detention Centre & Asylum Seeker Policy Program

- 1998 - *Those who've come across the seas*: report
- Unique factor - access to detention centres → reports published
- Ave 1-2 per yr (7 visits/5 reports 2010-11)
- Forensic, HR lens, respectful, authentic, intensive
- Impact milestone, 2004 - *A last resort?* Inquiry (Children)
- Policy staff do visits
- Frustration & morale issues

Evaluation Immigration Detention Asylum Seeker Program

- KI focus (small constituency)
- 17 interviews, Govt, NGO, D-Centre, staff team
- External interviewer
- Submissions citation analysis
- Detention centre report recc's analysis
- Children's report case study

Findings: both studies

- Authoritative, credible, respected & robust
- A leading contribution to policy influence to federal government level (SJ) evident
- Significant horizontal influence across peak body stakeholders evident (both)
- Primary information source for advocacy & lobbying (both)
- Advocacy capacity among stakeholders increased (both)

Implications...is the model working?

- How well has it informed our decision making?
- How feasible is it (cost & staffing)?
- How robust is the methodology?
 - E.g. Citation is imperfect, but patterns are supported by triangulation
- How well will it transfer?
 - Will it fit contexts other than the human rights?
- Did it build staff capability?
- Contribution of our ECB initiative?

Implications...cont

- Simple mix meths can work in low budget but not ‘novice’ context
- Needs systematic planned approach
- Our TOC is plausible
- Staff impact - significant staff morale, validation,

**Organisationally, we can demonstrate
contribution to Goal 3 and say**

***We are a respected and influential
advocate for human rights***

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Thank you for your time

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