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Governance of Indigenous Data

NIAA Engagement Officer Talking Points

CONTEXT:

- *Regional staff of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) have requested Talking Points to guide discussions with communities on the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data (GID).*
- *Key messaging points include:*
 - *The Framework for GID empowers communities to have a greater say on how government works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (or Indigenous) data.*
 - *NIAA engagement officers can communicate to families and communities what they should expect in relation to government-held Indigenous data.*

TALKING POINTS:

- Data shouldn't scare people, it's not just about numbers.
- Data can include stories and pictures, and can be designed to best suit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- When people collect data, it can be in the form of questions in surveys, yarning circles, or community forums or meetings.
 - It can be on paper, or in a computer.
- Data can be used by communities to tell their own stories, to understand any challenges they might face, and to set their own priorities.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are asking:
 - What data relating to them are held by government?
 - What rights do they have to these data?
 - How are these data used? and
 - How can these data be accessed?

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- To help answer these questions, Australian Government agencies have developed a Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data.
 - It was developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - It calls for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement at all stages of working with data, from the time of creation, to storage, and use.
 - It is built on the idea that listening to families and communities leads to better services and programs.
- The Framework outlines next steps for government to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in data about them that the government collects or holds.
 - It guides agencies to improve how they work with Indigenous data.
- The Framework was published in May 2024, and there is a seven year implementation plan for government to fully implement all the actions.
- Implementing the Framework will support the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, especially the Priority Reforms. This includes:
 - Priority Reform Three (*Transforming Government Organisations*), and
 - Priority Reform Four (*Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level*).
- Some people are talking about Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS).
 - This is a movement that says Indigenous people should control information about them.
 - The Framework is the government's response to IDS – making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a say on data affecting them.
- There are some practical things that communities can do now, such as:
 - Ask NIAA what data they hold that relates to their community.
 - Start talking to NIAA about the need to reflect what success looks like in their community in funding agreements and Key Performance Indicators.

