



OCHRE: One year on



Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment





ARTIST RECOGNITION

Kim Healey is a descendant of the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr nations, and also a descendant of the Djunbun (Platypus) Clan, original custodians of the Washpool at Lionsville in Northern NSW. She currently lives within Country in South Grafton NSW, creating and telling her stories along the mighty Clarence River. Kim strives to capture Country and utilise her voice through her work, to interpret the world around her.

This work captures Kim Healey's connection to Country. It speaks of the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr nations which were created by the Yuldarah, the creator of rivers, boundaries and tribal land. This is the Clarence River boundary with Susan Island in the middle of these two tribes which is a birthing place. Using a sgraffito technique, scribing in the sandy medium is a mapping system of Country.

ISBN : 978-0-9585971-2-8 © September 2014

ochre@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au
www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

OCBRE *stands for:*

Opportunity

Ochre is culturally significant to Aboriginal people within NSW and is used in ceremonies to bind people to each other and their Country. Ochre is recognised for its special healing powers which promote physical, emotional and spiritual health.

CONTENTS

Minister's Foreword	2
General Manager's Message	3
About <i>OCHRE</i>	4
ACCOUNTABILITY	6
Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs	7
Solution Brokerage	8
Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework	8
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS	9
LINKING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT	14
Opportunity Hubs	16
Connected Communities	20
Aboriginal Economic Development Framework and Industry-Based Agreements	23
Aboriginal Employment Strategy	25
ABORIGINAL LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES	26
LOCAL DECISION MAKING	28
Strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal NGOs	33
HEALING	34
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT	36

Healing

Choice

Responsibility

Empowerment

MINISTER'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present to the NSW Parliament the first annual *OCHRE* progress report. *OCHRE* is a plan which sees young Aboriginal people as agents of change. Its initiatives aim to strengthen pride and identity, self-confidence and aspiration among Aboriginal people.

It was developed in partnership with Aboriginal communities. It's a plan which acknowledges the need to do things differently in order to achieve positive and sustainable generational change.

Doing things differently means accountability and mutual responsibility; and it means no new programs without proper evaluation, scrutiny and results.

As I travel around NSW and meet with Aboriginal people, I am struck by the enormous goodwill which exists within communities for *OCHRE* initiatives.

In the 14 months since its release many milestones have been reached across a number of *OCHRE* initiatives, including (amongst others) the establishment of five Language and Culture Nests to help revitalise Aboriginal languages and culture; and four Opportunity Hubs to keep Aboriginal students in school and link them to pathways to further education and employment. But in many ways these achievements are only the beginning of our journey.

To make these reforms stick in the long term we must constantly strive to strengthen the partnership between government and Aboriginal people.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts and renew our focus to ensure that the partnerships which delivered this blueprint are robust and enduring.

Integral to the long-term success of *OCHRE* is trust. A government can only achieve this when it demonstrates its willingness to listen to communities and to act on their advice.

During the Ministerial Taskforce consultations accountability was a recurring theme.

Aboriginal community leaders advocated strongly for an accountability model with the NSW Ombudsman at its centre. The NSW Government listened and has delivered for community.

Programs within *OCHRE* will be monitored by a new Deputy Ombudsman responsible for Aboriginal Programs.

The Deputy Ombudsman will assist the Ombudsman in the provision of regular reports to Parliament on the NSW Government's delivery of *OCHRE* programs including Connected Communities, Local Decision Making, Opportunity Hubs and Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.

As I said at the time *OCHRE* was released – there are no quick fixes. It is inevitable that the Ombudsman's reports will uncover shortcomings within *OCHRE* programs.

However, with the Ombudsman's reports, the NSW Government will be in a far stronger position to recalibrate programs to ensure they remain on track to meet their intended milestones and goals.

Similarly, I am encouraged by the goodwill and ingenuity which exist across the private sector, NGOs and tertiary institutions to drive better education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victor Dominello'.

– The Hon. Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Since the release of *OCHRE* in April 2013 we have laid the foundations for the changes we need to achieve real improvements in long-term outcomes for Aboriginal communities in New South Wales. Above all, it has been critical to take the time necessary to build strong partnerships with Aboriginal communities, industry and all levels of government.

Reflecting on the past year, one of the most encouraging trends has been the overwhelmingly positive response from Aboriginal communities. *OCHRE* is, at its heart, a strong plan with clearly focused goals that follows a life course approach to achieve enduring, generational change. Throughout this first year of its implementation, we have emphasised a genuine, ongoing, two-way dialogue with Aboriginal communities to ensure everybody is on the journey together. This has given Aboriginal communities a strong sense of ownership and has given us the confidence to stand behind the commitments made within *OCHRE*.

Looking ahead to the next year, we plan to move beyond implementation planning towards delivery. At all times, we will maintain a strong focus on our commitment to self-determination across all projects, most powerfully realised through the Local Decision Making Regional Alliances.

This next stage will also allow us to begin to measure our success against what Aboriginal communities tell us is important. To ensure such accountability we are developing a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework that will include evaluation plans for the major initiatives. Once the Framework has been finalised, future progress reports on the implementation of *OCHRE* will include a stronger focus on data that can demonstrate the outcomes being achieved for Aboriginal people and communities.

I would like to thank the many Aboriginal communities across NSW who have shown an unflinching commitment to the success of *OCHRE*. The willingness of so many Aboriginal communities to volunteer their own time to participate in consultations and workshops strongly and positively influenced the ways *OCHRE*'s initiatives were rolled out over the past year. I would also like to extend this thanks to my team and all of the *OCHRE* Project Managers who have demonstrated remarkable dedication to the plan.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Ardler', written in a cursive style.

– Mr Jason Ardler
General Manager
Aboriginal Affairs

ABOUT OCHRE

OCHRE

is the NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal affairs which has education, employment and accountability at its heart.

The plan was released in the NSW Parliament on 5 April 2013 by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Victor Dominello MP. The Department of Education and Communities – which includes Aboriginal Affairs – and its government and non-government partners have commenced implementing *OCHRE*'s initiatives across the state.

This document reports achievements from the period 5 April 2013 to 30 June 2014, the first year of implementation planning and implementation for all initiatives. Some early results have been published in this report. With the evaluation plans now being developed for major *OCHRE* initiatives, future reports will contain more detailed information about performance.

Translating *OCHRE*'s policy commitments into real change at the local, regional and state levels is proving both rewarding and challenging. The complexities of doing things differently have prompted everyone working on *OCHRE* to continually reflect on how they work, and what they do day to day.

This has given us an invaluable opportunity to include a 'What we have learnt' section in this report. By sharing what we learn, as we learn, we can build more effective partnerships with Aboriginal communities into the future.

Summary of achievements

Key achievements since *OCHRE*'s release in April 2013 to June 2014 include:

- Legislation to amend the *Ombudsman Act 1974* passed through Parliament, creating a Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs to provide independent monitoring and assessment of *OCHRE* initiatives.
- The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre of Australia (CIRCA) was selected to prepare a five-year Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework for *OCHRE*.
- Five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests identified and launched to support the revitalisation of language and culture and to increase the number of speakers and teachers.
- Non-government providers appointed to operate Opportunity Hubs in the Upper Hunter, Dubbo, Tamworth and Campbelltown regions to support Aboriginal students to stay at school and successfully transition from school into further study, training or employment.
- The Connected Communities strategy has been established in 15 schools to drive educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people through linking school education to other related services, such as health, wellbeing, early childhood education and care, and vocational education and training.



- Industry-Based Agreements signed with the minerals/mining and building/construction sectors to increase Aboriginal employment and enterprise across these sectors.
- Public consultation completed on the Aboriginal Economic Development Policy to help shape how the NSW Government will support Aboriginal economic participation.
- Local Decision Making initiatives to give Aboriginal communities real input into the delivery of government services, with three groups selected following an Expression of Interest process: Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Far Western NSW), the Illawarra and Wingecarribee Regional Partnership Alliance (South East NSW) and the Many Rivers Regional Aboriginal Development Authority (NSW North Coast). Accords between the regional alliances and the NSW Government will be negotiated that will set priorities for service delivery redesign and investment, and commit to the sharing of information and decision-making power.



Image (bottom right): Industry-based Agreement signing with Master Builders Association, Watpac construction site, One Central Park Ultimo.



ACCOUNTABILITY

The implementation of *OCHRE* is underpinned by a robust accountability framework that includes independent monitoring and assessment and regular public reporting on progress and learnings – including a commitment to work with Aboriginal communities to set the measures of success.

In the long term, *OCHRE*'s accountability framework aims to:

- embed a new partnership with Aboriginal people across government
- ensure that all the initiatives in *OCHRE* are implemented successfully
- improve the effectiveness of government expenditure in Aboriginal affairs.



DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN FOR ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS

Description

Aboriginal communities have continually called for greater transparency and accountability in the design and delivery of Aboriginal programs. The NSW Auditor-General and NSW Ombudsman have made similar recommendations.

OCHRE committed the NSW Government to the establishment of a new Coordinator General for Aboriginal Affairs and an independent Aboriginal council. After consulting with Aboriginal representatives on the Taskforce, NSW Government agencies, Auditor-General and Ombudsman, on this proposal, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs sought the development of a new proposal for a Deputy Ombudsman with oversight of Aboriginal affairs.

The Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs meets the community's expectations for accountability and the NSW Ombudsman has new functions and powers to monitor and assess nominated NSW Government Aboriginal programs.

With these powers, the Deputy Ombudsman will seek information from government agencies – which are obliged to provide information on their Aboriginal programs – and will consult with, and report to, the Minister responsible for particular Aboriginal programs. Ministers must table reports in the NSW Parliament within one month of receiving them. Such monitoring and assessment seeks to achieve continuous improvements throughout the life of each program, instead of leaving reviews until the program ends and when it is too late to make positive changes. The first Aboriginal program to be nominated is *OCHRE* itself.

What have we achieved?

- Legislation passed through Parliament to amend the *Ombudsman Act 1974* to create a Deputy Ombudsman for Aboriginal Programs to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs. The first Aboriginal program to be listed in the Regulations of that Act is *OCHRE*.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To develop consultation processes with the Ombudsman's office to ensure regular feedback is provided to Aboriginal Affairs (and relevant stakeholder agencies) in relation to any identified obstacles to implementation as well as positive practices to inform the agency's solution-broker role.
- To work closely with the Ombudsman's office in relation to the development of an evaluation framework for *OCHRE* to ensure that it complements the Ombudsman's monitoring and assessment function by identifying consistent performance measures and supporting data; and to ensure efficient processes are established for agencies to report results to avoid duplicated effort.

What people are saying about accountability ...

“*This new position is a game changer – it shows the Government is committed to better outcomes for Aboriginal people in NSW.*”

– **Professor Shane Houston**, University of Sydney Deputy Vice-Chancellor, 10 April 2013

“*I strongly support this initiative and congratulate the Minister for delivering on his commitment. The issue of accountability was raised repeatedly by Aboriginal communities across the state during our taskforce consultation.*”

It is hoped the creation of the position of Aboriginal Deputy Ombudsman will lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, with more regular reports on how well these initiatives are being implemented in Aboriginal communities.”

– **Stephen Ryan**, former member of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs, 22 December 2013.

SOLUTION BROKERAGE

Description

Under *OCHRE*, Aboriginal Affairs has a role in delivering whole-of-government solutions in response to local, regional and state-wide issues that are impacting on Aboriginal people and communities.

Criteria must be met before Aboriginal Affairs can invoke this solution brokerage power. For example: the issue must require multiple agency involvement; be deemed “significant”; be able to be resolved within the short to medium term (six months) and within existing resources; and be current, noting that the Auditor-General and the NSW Ombudsman can review past action and performance.

Solution brokerage action is time-limited, with a fixed end date; it is not a long-term “fix-it” role for specific on-going service delivery or program issues. Solution brokerage will operate in a clear project management framework, delegating authority to the officer in charge, assigning cross-agency project teams with clearly defined roles, establishing Solution Brokerage Response Plans with resources, milestones, accountabilities and start and end dates.

What have we achieved?

- Prepared draft cross-government arrangements to support the delivery of solution brokerage which was approved by the Senior Management Council – a forum of all department Secretaries.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To publish the cross-government operational framework and commence implementation of solution brokerage.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Description

The *OCHRE* Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework is being developed to enable the evaluation of the progress and effectiveness of the major initiatives, and to define the evidence base required.

The MERI Framework will include evaluation plans for Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests; Industry Based Agreements; Local Decision Making; and Opportunity Hubs. The Department of Education and Communities Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation will manage the evaluation of Connected Communities separately.

What have we achieved?

- Research partner appointed to build a new evidence base to support effective government engagement with Aboriginal communities. The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre of Australia (CIRCA) was selected in March 2014 to prepare a five year Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework for *OCHRE*.
- The development of a draft Theory of Change (also known as a “Results Logic”) for *OCHRE*.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To publish the MERI Framework, including the evaluation plans.
- To publish a literature review on Aboriginal people’s participation in research and evaluation.
- To collect data in preparation for the evaluation of the major initiatives.
- To continue to work with Aboriginal communities to set the measures of success.
- To report, where possible, on the data collected and the outcomes being achieved for Aboriginal people and communities.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NESTS

Five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests have been established to revitalise and maintain languages as an integral part of culture and identity.

An Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest is a local network of communities bound together by their connection to an Aboriginal language. That is, the local communities collectively form a language and culture nest.

In communities, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests aim to provide a continuous learning pathway for Aboriginal people and recognise the existing language skills and knowledge of Aboriginal community members. In schools, Language and Culture Nests aim to provide Aboriginal students and their families with a continuous pathway of learning from preschool to Year 12 and into tertiary education (TAFE and universities) and to offer Aboriginal students a new opportunity to consider language teaching as a vocation.

A Keeping Place located in each of the Language and Culture Nest, identified by the local Aboriginal community will provide advice relating to the local Aboriginal language as well as housing language resources for use by communities including organisations such as schools, universities and TAFE institutes. Ownership of Aboriginal language and culture remains solely with local Aboriginal communities.

In the long term, Language and Culture Nests aim to:

- improve knowledge of, and competency in, Aboriginal languages
- strengthen Aboriginal identity, pride and community resilience
- increase the number of language learners
- increase the number of language teachers
- contribute to increased school attendance and retention.



Image (right): Launch of the Bundjalung Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest in Lismore, 20 February 2014.



What have we achieved?

- Five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests have been launched by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs following negotiations with Aboriginal communities. They are:
 - North West Wiradjuri Language and Culture Nest (launched 25 October 2013)
 - Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture Nest (launched 19 February 2014)
 - Bundjalung Language and Culture Nest (launched 20 February 2014)
 - Paakantji/Baakantji Language and Culture Nest (launched 30 April 2014)
 - Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay Language and Culture Nest (launched 2 May 2014)
- Temporary Keeping Places identified by local Aboriginal communities and their language groups. They are:
 - Yarradamarra Centre, TAFE Western Dubbo (North West Wiradjuri Nest)
 - Coffs Harbour Education Campus, Coffs Harbour (North Gumbaynggirr Nest)
 - Gnibi Centre Southern Cross University, Lismore (Bundjalung Nest)
 - Wilcannia Central School, Wilcannia (Paakantji Nest).

A permanent Keeping Place known as the

Goondee Aboriginal Keeping Place, Lightning Ridge has been identified for the Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay Nest.

- Revised K-10 Aboriginal Languages Scope and Sequence launched by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on 13 December 2013. This provides the basis for the development of Aboriginal language units of work and will guide program development in schools and communities with Aboriginal language programs.
- Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards commenced the development of the Aboriginal Languages Stage 6 Content Endorsed Course that has the capacity to engage students who are interested in vocational pathways or who may be at risk of disengaging from education.
- Determination of Employment Conditions and Remuneration for Aboriginal language tutors signed by the Secretary, Department of Education and Communities in February 2014. This determined the rate paid to staff in the classification of Aboriginal Language Tutors when Aboriginal Language Tutors are employed by the Department. The determination increased the rate of pay from \$21.63 to \$39.92 per hour. If tutors are employed on a temporary basis the rate of pay is \$25.36 per hour with accrual of pro-rata.
- 50 Aboriginal language tutors employed in the five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.

How many schools and Aboriginal students have the opportunity to engage with the Language and Culture Nests?

		
Language Group	No. of Government schools participating	No. of Aboriginal students enrolled (FTE) in 2013
Bundjalung	34	1,987
Gamilaraay	5	536
Gumbaynggirr	33	1,504
Paarkintji/Barkindji	13	761
Wiradjuri	23	2,765

Source: Centre for Education Statistics & Evaluation, Department of Education and Communities

How many Aboriginal language tutors have been engaged and what are their qualifications?

50



Aboriginal language tutors have been engaged for the five Language and Culture Nests – all have a TAFE Certificate III qualification.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To finalise the locations of the Keeping Places in four of the five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.
- To continue implementation of the revised K-10 Aboriginal Languages Scope and Sequence across schools participating in the five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.
- To complete phases 1 and 2 of the development of the Stage 6 Content Endorsed Course.
- Consultation to develop units of work in each of the five Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.
- To increase the number of language resources developed and published in each of the Language and Culture Nests.
- To increase the number of students accessing Aboriginal languages through the Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests.
- To appoint a teacher and community coordinator and engage more language tutors for each of the Nests.
- To explore options to support Aboriginal people to further enhance their skills in teaching Aboriginal languages.
- To advance discussions and negotiations with universities and TAFE institutes on courses and career pathways for Aboriginal language tutors and teachers.
- To promote scholarships for Aboriginal teachers to further their studies of Aboriginal languages.

What people are saying about Language and Culture Nests ...

“Language is a familiar and widely understood basis for identity, so speaking our own language helps Indigenous people and other Australians to understand and accept who we really are. The Language and Culture Nest (initiative) is about reinvigorating knowledge systems and normalising Indigenous identity within communities. The cultural strength that flows from language empowers individuals and groups to feel proud and to use their cultural certainty for the wellbeing of the whole country and its community.”

– **Dr Norm Sheehan**, Director of the Gribi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples, 19 February 2014

“This Nest is a vital resource which will enable the training of more local Aboriginal language speakers, strengthening the teaching of Gumbaynggirr language and culture. I want all Aboriginal people, regardless of age, to have the opportunity to learn their traditional language and develop a greater understanding of their culture and have pride in their identity.”

– **Mark Flanders**, Gumbaynggirr man and 2011 Aboriginal Community Worker of the Year, 19 February 2014

“The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG Inc.) applauds the NSW government on its commitment to the revitalisation, reclamation and maintenance of Aboriginal Languages through the establishment of Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests as outlined in the OCHRE Plan.

The NSW AECG Inc. has been an integral part of the setting up of Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests and understands first hand how important cultural affirmation is to Aboriginal communities”

– **Cindy Berwick**, President Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), 26 September 2014

Ngiyanhi winhanganha nganha Wiradjuri mayiny-galang-gu
 Ngiyanggarra-bang malang-galang-gu nganhayung mayiny-galang-gu
 ngangaanha-gu Ngurambang-ga.

‘Wiray’ TAFE-gu-bu, ‘Wiray’ School-galang-gu-bu,
 ‘Wiray’ University-galang-gu-bu!

Nganyguliya gariya nganhayung ngiyanggarra-gu-bu gariya gulbabang-gu-bu.

Ngiyanhi ngamangamarra nganha Wiradjuri ngiyanggarra-bang-galang
 garry-gu-bu dumbarra-bu widyungga mulan-gu garray ngindhu yanhanhi.

Ngiyanhi ngamangamarra-bang nganha ngiyanhi malang-dhuray Ngurambang
 Wirimbigunhanha-gu nganha nganhayung mayiny-galang ngangaagirri
 Nganhayung Wiradjuri Ngiyanggarra-gu-bu gulbabang-gu-bu.

Ngurambang Dhaga ngiyanhi ngiilinya marramarra
 Ngiyanggarra-girr-bang-gu-bu.

Gulbabang-girr-gu-bu.



- **Aunty Diane McNaboe and Uncle Stan Grant AM**, Wiradjuri Elders and language speakers and teachers, and **Rod Towney**, Director Aboriginal Education and Equity Provision, who have given permission for their message to be printed in Wiradjuri.

21 July 2014

English translation:

We (all) think that Wiradjuri people’s very important speak/language should belong to our people to look after and care for – in special place.

‘Not’ to TAFE and ‘Not’ to Schools and ‘Not’ to Universities also!

They do not own our language or Cultural Knowledge.

We (all) feel that Wiradjuri language belongs to the land and shows also which part of the land you come from.

We (all) really feel that we (all) should have special place. Keeping (preserving) that our own people will look after/care for our own Wiradjuri language and Cultural Knowledge.

A special place where we (all) can keep making Language-things (special), ours and Cultural Knowledge things ours also.



LINKING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

OCHRE contains a number of initiatives to address the barriers to meaningful economic participation for Aboriginal communities. In the long-term *OCHRE*'s economic development initiatives aim to:

- contribute to an increase in school attendance and retention
- increase student transitions from school to employment or tertiary education
- increase the number of Aboriginal people employed
- increase the number of Aboriginal-owned businesses.



Image (above left): Launch of Dubbo Opportunity Hub, 10 April 2014.

How many Aboriginal people in NSW are employed?

There are three separate groups of people reported in employment statistics:

1. **Employed** – people who work one or more hour in the reference period.
2. **Unemployed** – people who do not have a job but are actively looking for work, and available to start work.
3. **Not in the labour force** – people who:
 - do not want to work (i.e. people who are studying, caring for children full time, have an illness or disability that prevents them from working, retired, doing home duties etc.), or
 - want work but are not actively looking (i.e. have given up trying to find a job), or are not available to start.

The proportion of Aboriginal people in each group at the time of the 2011 Census is shown below:

Employment status in NSW, by Aboriginality, 2011



At the time of the 2011 Census, there were 46,807 Aboriginal people who were employed in NSW. The Aboriginal unemployment rate was 17.0%, a rate that was almost three times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal people (5.8%).

The rate of persons in the labour force was 54.3 per cent for Aboriginal people and 74.2% for non-Aboriginal people. The rate of people not in the labour force was 45.7% for Aboriginal people and 25.8% for non-Aboriginal people.

OPPORTUNITY HUBS

Description

Opportunity Hubs provide young Aboriginal people with clear pathways and incentives to stay at school and transition into employment, training or further education. Opportunity Hub providers work with families and communities to help build expectations within Aboriginal young people for success.

Improved outcomes are also achieved by coordinating existing local services and programs and linking Aboriginal young people into these supports. By working more effectively with the community, businesses and other stakeholders, Opportunity Hubs can broker personalised support for Aboriginal young people and match them to sustainable jobs or further education opportunities.

The Upper Hunter, Campbelltown, Dubbo and Tamworth were chosen as the first sites for Opportunity Hubs because of their strong and engaged Aboriginal communities and the significant numbers of young Aboriginal people in these areas. The availability of local jobs and the range of local schooling and tertiary education options were also determining factors.

What have we achieved?

- Local support for the establishment of Opportunity Hubs confirmed through extensive consultation with Aboriginal communities in the four pilot areas (Upper Hunter, Campbelltown, Dubbo and Tamworth).
- All Opportunity Hubs fully operational and four non-government service providers appointed:
 - CentaCare Wilcannia Forbes, appointed December 2013 and operating in Dubbo.
 - Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, appointed December 2013 and operating in the Upper Hunter
 - Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council, appointed March 2014 and operating in Tamworth
 - Marrickville Training Centre Inc. (MTC Australia), appointed March 2014 and operating in Campbelltown.



- Strong progress evident for the first two hubs established in the Upper Hunter and Dubbo. Hubs in Tamworth and Campbelltown, established in March 2014, focused in this reporting period on becoming operational.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- Governance structures of Opportunity Hubs give local Aboriginal communities a strong voice in determining and directing their priorities and operations.
- Opportunity Hubs expand services and activities to support all young Aboriginal people in their operational areas.
- Opportunity Hubs develop and broker career education and inspiration programs for young Aboriginal people in partnership with industry and community, including career exploration programs such as the Real Game, attending career expos and hearing the stories of inspirational career ambassadors.
- Aboriginal Years 9-12 students engaged with Opportunity Hubs have career plans, informed by industry-grounded career education, experience and aspiration-raising programs, and that these career plans are integrated with their personal learning plans.
- To expand industry engagement with Opportunity Hubs, including through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth Vocational Training and Employment Centres, to provide expanded employment opportunities for Aboriginal young people.

What have the Opportunity Hub providers been working on?

Upper Hunter

- Staff have been employed to operate the Hub.
- Aboriginal school students have been engaged by the Hub and 14 of these students are being supported through an in-school program or direct mentoring to re-engage them in education or transition them into sustainable jobs.
- 15 schools are working with the Hub.
- Local Aboriginal community organisations have been engaged to gain their support in partnering with the Hub. The local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (Upper Hunter and Singleton), the Wanaruah Aboriginal Land Council and the Muswellbrook Reconciliation Committee have pledged their support.
- 5 employers and service providers have committed to the Hub.

- Aboriginal Employment Service is also working with TAFE and other Registered Training Organisations as well as approaching universities.

How many schools and students are located in the Upper Hunter area?

The service region is made up of the Local Government Areas of Muswellbrook, Singleton and the Upper Hunter. In 2013, there were 451 Aboriginal students (full-time equivalent enrolments)* in Years 5 to 12 from:

- 19 government schools, comprising 15 primary schools and 4 secondary schools.
- 8 non-government schools.

* This includes ungraded students

Dubbo

- Staff have been employed to operate the Hub.
- An advisory committee has been established with government, non-government and community stakeholders to guide the operation of the Hub.
- Information packs have been developed for schools to promote the Hub.
- 19 Aboriginal students have been engaged by the Hub and 11 of these students have been receiving mentoring to support them to stay engaged in school.
- 21 schools have committed to working with the Hub.
- Centacare has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with John Holland and engaged the Aboriginal Resource Group to facilitate access to mining and resource companies who can work with students participating in the Hub.

- Centacare is building a relationship with Charles Sturt University (the main tertiary education provider in Dubbo) to broker a connection between the University and schools that are participating in the Hub.
- Centacare has approached potential industry partners such as John Holland and engaged the Aboriginal Resource Group to facilitate access to mining and resource companies who can work with students participating in the Hub.

How many schools and students are located in the Dubbo area?

The service region is made up of the Local Government Area of Dubbo. In 2013, there were 1,112 Aboriginal students (full-time equivalent enrolments) in Years 5 to 12 from:

- 13 government schools, comprising 7 primary schools, 2 schools for specific purpose and 4 secondary schools.
- 8 non-government schools.

What have the Opportunity Hub providers been working on? (continued)

The Hubs operating in Campbelltown and Tamworth were appointed in March 2014. Between March and 30 June 2014, the Marrickville Training Centre and Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council have been busy establishing Hubs in their regions. Activities include: recruitment and appointment of staff; securing or preparing appropriate premises; and developing communication materials to promote their operations to Aboriginal students.

Campbelltown

How many schools and students are located in the Campbelltown area?

The service region is made up of the Local Government Area of Campbelltown. In 2013, there were 1,061 Aboriginal students (full-time

equivalent enrolments) in Years 5 to 12 from:

- 49 government schools, comprising 29 primary schools, 8 schools for specific purpose and 12 secondary schools.
- 14 non-government schools.

Tamworth

How many schools and students are located in the Tamworth area?

The service region is made up of the Local Government Area of Tamworth. In 2013, there were 1,026 Aboriginal students (full-time

equivalent enrolments) in Years 5 to 12 from:

- 25 government schools, comprising 17 primary schools, 2 school for specific purpose and 6 secondary schools.
- 8 non-government schools.

Source: Schools data produced by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Department of Education and Communities. Activity data supplied by State Training Services, Department of Education and Communities.

What people are saying about Opportunity Hubs ...

“The new Opportunity Hubs will deliver individualised plans for our Aboriginal youth, with a targeted approach and local ownership. Opportunity Hubs complement the mix of services we currently deliver in and around Dubbo. We look forward to working with the families and communities to make this a success for Dubbo and most importantly a success for our Aboriginal youth.”

– **Helen Clark**, Director, Employment, Training and Youth Services, CentaCare Wilcannia- Forbes, 18 December 2013

“We are thrilled to be working in partnership with such a wide range of Aboriginal organisations, community service providers, employers and industry groups to bring this project to fruition.”

– **Serge Derkatch**, Chairman, Marrickville Training Centre Inc., 31 March 2014

“I look forward to these young people going on to graduate from the University of Sydney and other universities, taking their place as doctors, lawyers, engineers and community leaders.”

– **Prof. Shane Houston**, University of Sydney's Deputy Vice Chancellor, 28 August 2013

I think that we can really change lives by providing young Aboriginal people with inspiration through mentorship whilst directing them towards real jobs, real opportunity and real change.

I feel that the local and wider community will embrace the philosophy of the Opportunity Hub Tamworth, as it has been established as a direct result of government consultation with community.

I hope that the program and its success in linking Aboriginal young people with employment, education and or training help to serve as a vehicle for reconciliation, breaking down barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians as our young people go out there and achieve amazing things!

”

– **Fiona Snape**, CEO of Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council (Tamworth Opportunity Hub) 26 May 2014

I think this is a fantastic and valuable program that can provide real opportunities and guidance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to assist them to navigate their way through their future education and employment journey.

I feel that MTC Australia can provide invaluable assistance to guide and mentor these young people on this journey. We are well equipped with established youth and employment programs, as well as a passionate Indigenous community programs team to link in and assist the Opportunity Hub.

I hope that the success of this program provides young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the tools, knowledge and wisdom to enable them to be the leaders and mentors of future generations.

”

– **Lance Edwards**, Marrickville Training Centre (Campbelltown Opportunity Hub) 24 July 2014

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Description

Connected Communities schools work in partnership with local Aboriginal leaders and the community to improve educational outcomes for young Aboriginal people.

The Connected Communities strategy puts schools at the heart of the community. By using schools as community hubs to provide support from birth into early childhood, throughout the school years and onto further training and employment, the Connected Communities strategy aims to:

- forge stronger partnerships between schools, the local community and government and non-government agencies to maximise opportunities for young Aboriginal people
- facilitate better educational outcomes by linking relevant community services including health, early childhood education, housing and police, as well as vocational education and training providers.

The following positions and support structures have been introduced for all Connected Communities schools to promote educational excellence and to ensure the genuine ownership and input of Aboriginal communities.

- Executive Principal – a senior position open only to highly experienced and skilled educators selected by a panel including local Aboriginal people. Executive Principals are appointed for up to five years to work towards targets based on government plans – including *NSW 2021: a Plan to make NSW Number 1*, the NSW government's *Rural and Remote Education Blueprint for Action*, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* and the *Investing in Focus Schools National Partnership agreement* – as well as local goals.
- Senior Leader (larger schools) and Leader (smaller schools), Community Engagement – executive level positions for Aboriginal people who support their Executive Principal and act as cultural mentors across their Connected Communities school.

- Local School Reference Groups – made up of Aboriginal leaders, community members and parents working in collaboration with school leaders to make decisions about student needs and resources. Local School Reference Groups are operating in all 15 schools. Each reference group is chaired by the local president of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, a state-wide Aboriginal community organisation that advocates for community input into education and training. Governance training was delivered to members in April 2014.

Connected Communities schools are underpinned by the outstanding success of the established *Connecting to Country* initiative that enables the Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group to “teach the teachers” by providing short courses of intensive, in-the-field immersion in Aboriginal cultures and follow-up professional development.

A \$35 million building and maintenance program is improving facilities in Connected Communities schools, many of which serve the state's most disadvantaged rural and remote communities. The program, announced in 2013 and to be delivered over four years, includes \$25 million for major rebuilding and upgrading works at three Connected Communities schools, and \$10.3 million for maintenance and minor works at the other schools.

An additional \$3 million is supporting early childhood education infrastructure at Connected Communities schools without state-run preschools (Bourke, Brewarrina, Menindee, Toomelah, Moree East and Hillvue).

The Connected Communities schools, as indicated on the map (pg 22), are Brewarrina Central School **1**, Boggabilla Central School **2**, Bourke Public School & Bourke High School **3**, Coonamble Public School & Coonamble High School **4**, Hillvue Public School **5**, Menindee Central School **6**, Moree East Public School & Moree Secondary College **7**, Taree Public School & Taree High School **8**, Toomelah Public School **9**, Walgett Community School **10**, and Wilcannia Central School **11**.

Connected Communities was originally launched in May 2012 and came into effect in 15 remote and regional public schools with large Aboriginal enrolments at the start of the 2013 school year. The program has since been incorporated into *OCHRE*.

What have we achieved?

- Executive Principals appointed for all 15 Connected Communities schools.
- Senior Leaders or Leaders, Community Engagement appointed in 13 Connected Communities schools. Two schools finalising recruitment.
- Early years programs introduced in all central and primary Connected Communities schools to increase Kindergarten enrolments and support children and their families as they start school.
- Three Connected Communities schools linked to their local Language and Culture Nest. Aboriginal language and culture teaching implemented in the 12 remaining schools for where the community's language that has not yet been associated with a Language and Culture Nest.
- Personalised learning plans developed, or in development, for all students at Connected Communities schools, promoting student, parent/carer and teacher engagement.

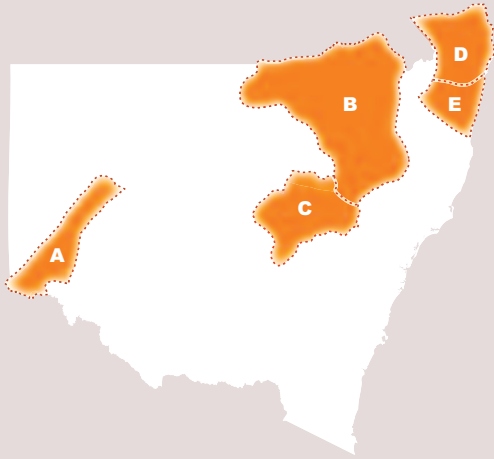
Local success

Connected Communities schools foster genuine community partnerships to develop programs that respond to local needs and make the most of locally available facilities and resources. Local successes so far include facilitation of the *Connecting to Country* initiative by the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group as professional development for teachers and school executives, forging partnerships with TAFEs, universities and other educational organisations to offer students advice and training for employment and identify opportunities for further study, and the roll-out of Clontarf academies across four Connected Communities sites as a further strategy to address school attendance.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To improve student outcomes in literacy, numeracy, school engagement and attendance to bolster future pathways.
- To review personalised learning plans for every student to reflect individual goals and aspirations, cultural identity and wellbeing, academic potential and personal interests and hobbies.
- To ensure the communities' involvement with the rollout of the Connected Communities strategy by strengthening and supporting Local School Reference Groups.
- To ensure the smooth rollout of capital works programs by consulting closely with communities via enhanced LSRGs.
- To consolidate the relationship between local branches of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Connected Communities schools to facilitate the ongoing delivery of cultural awareness training for all school staff.
- To support new Senior Leaders and Leaders, Community Engagement, to ensure all strategic, structural and cultural initiatives are embedded across all schools.
- To promote greater effort and collaboration within and across government and non-government agencies to support Connected Communities initiatives and Aboriginal students.
- To maintain engagement and attendance as a key focus and support the three Connected Communities schools (Wilcannia, Walgett and Boggabilla) participating in the Federal Government's Remote School Attendance Strategy.

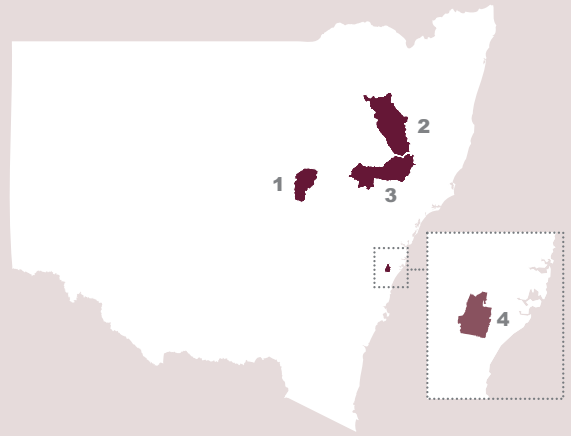
Language and Culture Nests



Language and Culture Nests aim to provide a continuous pathway of learning for Aboriginal people in communities and recognises the existing language skills and knowledge of Aboriginal community members.

- A** Paarkintji L&CN
- B** Gamilaraay L&CN
- C** North West Wiradjuri L&CN
- D** Bundjalung L&CN
- E** Gumbaynggirr L&CN

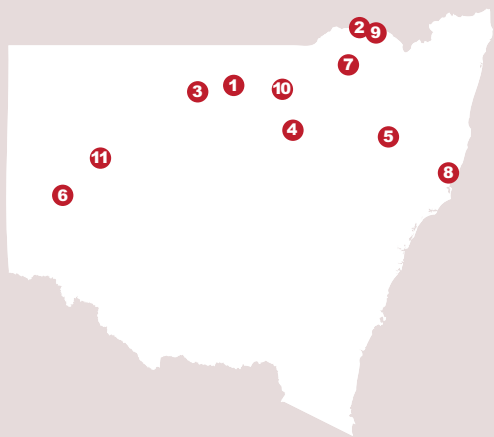
Opportunity Hubs



Opportunity Hubs link young Aboriginal people to local services and their communities to provide them with personalised, supported pathways through school and into further education and long term employment.

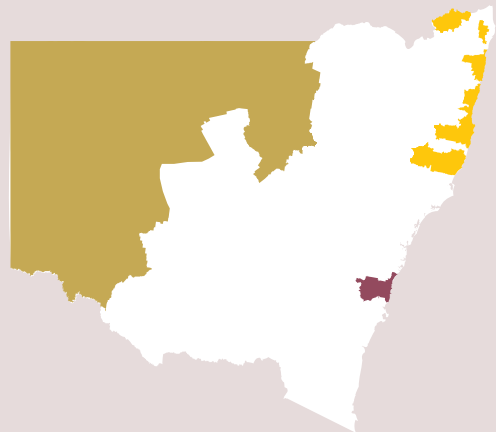
- 1** Dubbo
- 2** Tamworth
- 3** Upper Hunter
- 4** Campbelltown

Connected Communities



Connected Communities is an innovative initiative involving 15 regional schools in 11 locations to drive improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and all students, working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal community members and the broader community.

Local Decision Making



Local Decision Making marks a significant change in the way Aboriginal communities and government work together by giving Aboriginal communities progressively bigger say in what and how services are delivered in their communities.

- Murdi Paaki
- Many Rivers
- Illawarra Wingecarribee

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND INDUSTRY-BASED AGREEMENTS

Description

The NSW Aboriginal Economic Development Framework (AEDF) is being developed to co-ordinate the many activities undertaken across government to ensure stakeholders work together effectively to achieve genuine improvements in Aboriginal economic development in NSW.

When finalised, the AEDF will be a state-wide, multi-stakeholder plan to support Aboriginal people to realise their economic aspirations by developing sustainable employment and by building Aboriginal communities' economic and entrepreneurial capacity.

As part of the AEDF, the NSW Government is forging partnerships with peak industry bodies to support Aboriginal employment and enterprise through Industry-Based Agreements (IBAs). Through these agreements, industry sectors are working with the NSW Government and Aboriginal communities to identify and develop more jobs and business opportunities for Aboriginal people and to help Aboriginal people stay engaged in private sector jobs over the long term.

What have we achieved?

Industry-Based Agreements

- First Industry-Based Agreement with the minerals/mining sector signed on 3 June 2013 by the NSW Minerals Council and the NSW Government.
- Mining industry forum held on 24 June 2014, focused on building the capacity and support of mining companies to recruit and retain Aboriginal employees.
- Minerals/mining industry-wide Action Plan developed including commitments to: two industry forums (to include representatives from Aboriginal enterprises), the development of the industry's knowledge base, industry liaison with Opportunity Hubs, providing 6 scholarships to support Aboriginal students to stay in school, the

provision of industry-focused information on cultural competence and employment, and a regional trade fair for Aboriginal suppliers.

- Second IBA with the construction sector signed on 1 April 2014 by the Master Builders Association of NSW and the NSW Government. The IBA contains a building/construction industry-wide Action Plan to increase apprenticeships and employment opportunities in the industry for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Economic Development

- Development of an Aboriginal business portal commenced through a partnership between the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, Finance and Services and Aboriginal Affairs to assist companies wishing to engage Aboriginal businesses by enabling them to identify enterprises operating in their area and the services that they offer.
- Public consultation completed on the Aboriginal Economic Development Policy and Action Plan on 27 June 2014 to help shape how the NSW Government will support Aboriginal economic participation.
- Increased support for Aboriginal business through the NSW Procurement Board's *Direction 2013–04: Scope for government agencies to support Aboriginal businesses* (effective from 1 October 2013 for two years) which provides that NSW Government agencies can purchase goods and services valued up to \$150,000 (including GST) from a recognised Aboriginal business, provided:
 - the supplier's rates for the goods or services are reasonable and consistent with normal market rates
 - the agency obtains at least one written quotation.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To finalise the NSW Aboriginal Economic Development Framework (AEDF) to support additional opportunities for economic empowerment.
- To complete and launch the Aboriginal business portal to increase opportunities available to Aboriginal enterprises.
- To continue the implementation of IBA industry-wide Action Plans with the minerals/mining and building/construction sectors.
- To develop a third IBA and resulting Action Plan, with a focus on supporting more Aboriginal young people to get fulfilling and sustainable jobs.
- To work with NSW Government departments to prioritise procurement from Aboriginal suppliers and report publicly on their progress.

What people are saying about Industry-Based Agreements ...

“It is important for associations such as the Minerals Council to support growth in the Aboriginal workforce. Participation in the workforce is the cornerstone of gaining personal confidence, financial advancement and becoming a role model for young Aboriginal people.”

- **Danny Lester**, Chief Executive of Aboriginal Employment Strategy Ltd, 3 June 2013

I think that short-term approaches do not work – there needs to be a sustained and long-term commitment from industry and government to move beyond tokenism and enact big change.

I feel there is an air of optimism with the building and construction industry on an upward swing and there is an opportunity for our members to be strong advocates for change.

I hope we can increase the number of mature-age and young apprentices that complete at least two years of training so that they have a sound basis to a trade they can rely on or come back to.

”

- **Brian Seidler**, Executive Director, Master Builders Association of NSW
17 June 2014

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Description

The NSW public service is a major employer and has an important role to play in demonstrating good practice in Aboriginal employment. According to the 2013 *Getting into shape: state of the public sector* report, an estimated 2.74% of the total workforce (329,336.16 FTE) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in 2013. The sector has thus exceeded the target of 2.6% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees by 2015 set by the Council of Australian Governments.

The Public Service Commission is currently finalising the NSW public sector's new Aboriginal Employment Strategy, following an independent evaluation in 2013 of the NSW Government's 2006–12 program for boosting Aboriginal employment in the public sector, *Making It Our Business* (MIOB).

The new Strategy focuses on career development and increasing the representation of Aboriginal employees in senior roles and on strengthening Aboriginal cultural competence and understanding across the NSW public sector.

What have we achieved?

- *Making It Our Business* (MIOB) Evaluation Report published on 13 January 2014.
- Significant consultation undertaken with representatives of all primary departments and their key agencies across the NSW public sector that contributed to a first draft of the new public sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy.
- Sector-wide Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program (pilot) initiated and design work undertaken for pilot program to be delivered later in 2014.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To publish the new public sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy before the end of 2014.
- To implement public sector initiatives under the framework – including a pilot Aboriginal Career and Leadership Development Program – and to facilitate sector-wide professional networking for Aboriginal employees.
- The Public Service Commission will provide advice and guidance to assist agencies to determine which initiatives will best assist them to contribute to improved Aboriginal employment outcomes.
- To provide guidance on opportunities for, and the implications of, Aboriginal employment under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, including consideration of Aboriginal employment in the context of workforce diversity and workforce planning and its alignment with other initiatives such as the *NSW Public Sector Capability Framework*.
- To target agencies with low rates of Aboriginal employment.



ABORIGINAL LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW) establishes a network of Aboriginal Land Councils and provides a mechanism for them to claim and manage land as an economic base for Aboriginal communities - the legislation in NSW is recognised as the strongest in the world.

Land claimed by Aboriginal Land Councils, if granted, is transferred as freehold title. The objects of Aboriginal Land Councils are to use their land and other resources to *“improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal persons within the Council’s area and other persons who are members of the Council”*.

As part of *OCHRE*, the NSW Government undertook work with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council network and other key stakeholders to explore and pursue opportunities to improve the management and economic potential of Aboriginal owned land and natural resources to generate employment on Country.



What have we achieved?

- The initial suite of reforms to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* that aim to improve the administrative efficiency of the Land Council network was passed unanimously by Parliament on 11 September 2013 and came into effect on 18 September 2013.
- Nine public forums held across NSW from 12 August to 5 September 2013 on broader substantive reforms to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* relating to the area of land claims, Aboriginal social housing management and the regulatory framework.
- Work undertaken with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) in its development of a landmark Economic Development Policy to drive and support economic development of the 120 Land Councils across NSW.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To finalise the substantive reforms needed to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* relating to land claims, Aboriginal social housing management and the regulatory framework.
- To support the NSW Aboriginal Land Council in its implementation of its Economic Development Policy and consider ways in which NSW Government initiatives, specifically those under *OCHRE*, can complement that policy.
- To identify other opportunities to use government policy levers to unlock economic development potential on Aboriginal-owned land.

What people are saying about land rights ...

“*The proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act are the first critical reforms in an ongoing process of reviewing this landmark legislation... It's a reform process that will deliver a more effective legislative framework for Aboriginal Land Rights in NSW.*”

– **Stephen Ryan**, Councillor and former Chairperson of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, 19 June 2013, referring to the initial targeted reforms to the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.



LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Local Decision Making (LDM) marks a significant change in the way Aboriginal communities and government work together by giving Aboriginal communities a progressively bigger say in what services are delivered in their communities, and how they are delivered.

It responds to community consultations that highlighted the need for localised, flexible service delivery, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Through LDM, communities will progressively be delegated increased decision-making powers, once their capacity is proven and agreed conditions are met. Government service delivery will be directed through binding agreements (called Accords) with government on priorities identified by local Aboriginal communities. LDM will also direct the way government works with communities and obliges government agencies to achieve continuous improvement in services.

As LDM represents a turning point in the way government thinks about, plans, funds and delivers services to Aboriginal communities and a new 'whole of government' program structure has been established to support its introduction.

In the long-term, Local Decision Making aims to:

- decrease the duplication of services
- increase the effectiveness of service delivery to better meet local needs
- increase the skill and capacity of local governance bodies.



Image: Launch of the Local Decision Making initiative in Wollongong, 4 December 2013.

What have we achieved?

- Selection of the first three Local Decision Making (LDM) sites following an open Expression of Interest (EOI) process.
- Announcement of the three sites at a public launch with the Illawarra-Wingecarribee Regional Partnership Alliance in Wollongong on 4 December 2013.
They are:
 - Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Far Western NSW)
 - Illawarra and Wingecarribee Regional Partnership Alliance (South East NSW)
 - Regional Aboriginal Development Assembly (NSW North Coast)
- Dissemination of information using a comprehensive communication strategy that targeted Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal community organisations and peak bodies, government agencies and Members of Parliament.
- Commencement of work to establish priorities, negotiate the Accords and strengthen community capacity across first three LDM sites. It is anticipated that the Murdi Paaki Accord will be finalised before the end of 2014, and the Many Rivers and Illawarra-Wingecarribee Accords finalised in the first half of 2015.
- List of training and development service providers established via an open expression of interest. The list – a resource for LDM committees called a Panel of Service Providers – was published on the Aboriginal Affairs Website in December 2013 and is to be regularly refreshed.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To capitalise on the high level of community interest in LDM expressed during the 2013 EOI process – and also on the extent that Aboriginal communities beyond the LDM sites are strengthening their governance and wanting a stronger partnership with government – LDM will be implemented in additional locations before the end of 2014.
- To finalise the Accords that commit government to working with LDM committees and that set out:
 - how decision-making will be shared
 - initial priorities for joint work
 - government investment in capacity building
 - the pathway for progression to increased decision-making power.
- To continue to strengthen community governance capacity by changing the way that government shares information with regional alliances, implementing joint decision-making between regional alliances and government, and by regional alliances investing in their good governance capabilities. Improved community capacity relies as much on the way that government/NGOs work with communities as it does on direct investment in the capabilities of Aboriginal community leaders/organisations. Communities need to be in control of how they invest in their capacity and capabilities (it is not something that government or third parties should do to them).

What people are saying about Local Decision Making ...

“ This is an important reform because it empowers Aboriginal communities in NSW to change the conversation with government. It will ensure that accountability becomes a two-way street, with government and local communities working toward a common goal.

... It makes sense for local leaders – who understand their own community better than anyone – to have more control over decisions that affect them.”

– **Mick Gooda**, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 4 December 2013

“ This is unbelievable news and a fantastic opportunity for our community. We are very proud to be selected as one of the three sites across NSW to be part of this important initiative.”

– **Darrell Brown**, Chair of the Illawarra Regional Partnership Agreement, 5 December 2013

“ I welcome the approach Minister (of Aboriginal Affairs) Victor Dominello has taken to engage Aboriginal communities and organisations in setting policy directions...”

– **Jan Barham**, Greens MLC and spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs, 15 August 2013

I think the Government consulted, listened and responded to what we said and that's a very rare thing.

I feel very excited about the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly being chosen as a site.

I hope that in the long term we will have the right type and mix of services (and) there will be a house to live in and a school to send our children to.

”

– **Sam Jeffries**, Chair of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, 11 July 2014

What have the Regional Alliances been working on?

All three Regional Alliances have been hard at work building their governance structures and preparing to negotiate Accords with the NSW Government. The table below demonstrates how each Regional Assembly is progressing.

Key deliverables	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly	Illawarra and Wingecarribee Regional Partnership Alliance	Regional Aboriginal Development Assembly
Does a Charter or Terms of Reference exist that describes how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision-makers are selected, monitored, held accountable and replaced • committee processes and decision making rules operate • dispute resolution and complaints handling are managed? 	✓	draft prepared	draft prepared
Does the Regional Alliance meet regularly (i.e. at least monthly)?	✓	✓	✓
Has a Chairperson been elected?	✓	✓	✗ operating under interim arrangements
Has consultation commenced about priorities, regional alliance charters and operating arrangements?	✓	✓	✓
Have key priorities been agreed to that the Regional Alliances will take into Accord negotiations?	✓	commenced	commenced
Has the Regional Alliance made preparations to negotiate an Accord with the NSW Government?	negotiations have commenced	agency preparation under way	agency preparation under way
Are there auspicing arrangements in place that manage funding from Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of Regional Alliances?	✓	✓	✓
Are there existing partnerships and agreements with state, federal or local governments?	✓ Regional Partnership Agreement	✓ Regional Partnership Agreement	✓ Regional Partnership Agreement

What do we know about Aboriginal people living in the Local Decision Making regions?

Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Far Western NSW)	Illawarra and Wingecarribee Regional Partnership Alliance (South East NSW)	Regional Aboriginal Development Assembly (NSW North Coast)
<p>In 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal people in Murdi Paaki made up 16.3% of the population. This is an increase from 15.4% of the population of Murdi Paaki in 2006. <p>Much higher proportions of the Aboriginal population of Murdi Paaki are clustered in younger age groups than in the non-Aboriginal population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 to 4 year olds comprise 11.2% of the Aboriginal population compared with 5.9% of non-Aboriginal people. 27% of all people under 25 in Murdi Paaki are Aboriginal. The median age of non-Aboriginal residents of Murdi Paaki is 38; the median age of Aboriginal residents is 21. 	<p>In 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal people in the Illawarra and Wingecarribee made up 2.3% of the population. This is an increase from 1.7% of the population in 2006. <p>Much higher proportions of the Aboriginal population of the Illawarra and Wingecarribee are clustered in younger age groups than in the non-Aboriginal population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the 0 to 4 year olds Aboriginal babies and young children comprise 12.5% of the Aboriginal population compared to 6.1% for non-Aboriginal people. 4.0% of young people under 25 in Illawarra and Wingecarribee are Aboriginal. The median age of non-Aboriginal residents of the Many Rivers is 40; the median age of Aboriginal residents is 20. 	<p>In 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal people in the Many Rivers made up 4.7% of the population. This is an increase from 4.0% of the population in 2006. <p>Much higher proportions of the Aboriginal population of the Many Rivers are clustered in younger age groups than in the non-Aboriginal population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 to 4 year olds comprise 12.6% of the Aboriginal population compared with 5.4% of non-Aboriginal people. 7.4% of all people under 25 in the Many Rivers are Aboriginal. The median age of non-Aboriginal residents of the Many Rivers is 47; the median age of Aboriginal residents is 20.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Tablebuilder

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF ABORIGINAL NGOS

Description

Under *OCHRE*, the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) has responsibility for strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal non-government organisations (NGOs) to take up leadership roles across a wide range of relevant sectors and to progressively take charge of more decisions, programs and activities. To achieve this, the NSW Government is committed to building skills and capacity within Aboriginal NGOs themselves, to identifying and assessing strategies that work in one sector which could be successfully applied across NSW, and to better targeting state workforce and development strategies to include Aboriginal NGOs.

What have we achieved?

- An additional \$1.5 million in funding to the Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) announced in February 2014 to help build the number and capacity of Aboriginal NGOs providing disability and community services to Aboriginal people. The additional funding builds on existing investments aimed at enhancing the capacity of Aboriginal NGOs to provide services to children in Out of Home Care. The funds will help Aboriginal NGOs get ready to provide appropriate, targeted services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which gives people with disability choice in accessing services.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To continue implementation of the AbSec partnership with FACS, including the development of culturally appropriate resources aimed at building the capacity of Aboriginal NGOs.
- To map all Aboriginal NGOs and community organisations operating across NSW – including the roles and reach of peak Aboriginal organisations – to identify opportunities for capacity building. This will enable FACS to better understand the nature of the Aboriginal sector, highlighting opportunities to enhance collaboration, support and development activities. This will also highlight gaps in areas of service delivery across NSW as well as gaps in peak and support activities.
- To review existing NSW Government capacity-building resources for community organisations and determine their potential for application in the Aboriginal NGO sector. This will enable the sharing of good practice and targeting of beneficial activities. It will also enhance the NSW Government's ability to promote collaboration between mainstream and Aboriginal specific capacity activities.

What people are saying about Aboriginal NGO reform ...

“It's about ensuring people with disability have access to culturally-appropriate services and supports and goes to the heart of self-determination for Aboriginal communities.”

– Angela Webb, CEO AbSec, 19 March 2014



HEALING

OCHRE acknowledges that healing and intergenerational trauma and loss are real, significant and ongoing issues for Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal wellbeing has social, economic, emotional, cultural and spiritual dimensions and healing needs to occur at the individual, family and community level. Healing is a process that takes time and cannot be achieved through a one-off event or program. Many previous government programs and policies contributed significantly to the trauma, loss and pain felt by many Aboriginal people.

OCHRE includes a commitment from the NSW Government to work with Aboriginal communities, policy practitioners and service providers to advance the dialogue in NSW about trauma and healing and to begin developing responses informed by evidence of good practice and the real-life experiences of Aboriginal people.



Images: *OCHRE* Healing Forum – *Mapu Yaan Gurri, Marrunggir – Healing Our Way*, at the University of New South Wales, 23 July 2014.

What have we achieved?

- Recognition of NSW as a leader by Mick Gooda (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner) and Richard Weston (CEO, Healing Foundation) in its commitment to healing and as the first state in Australia to acknowledge healing in its strategic plan for Aboriginal Affairs.
- The successful *OCHRE* Healing Forum – Mapu Yaan Gurri, Marrunggir – Healing Our Way, held on 23 July at the University of New South Wales. More than 200 delegates representing 66 organisations, including government, non-government and Aboriginal organisations, participated in the forum to advance the dialogue in NSW about trauma and healing and to develop an appropriate role for government in supporting healing.
- The forging of a partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, strengthening links to national healing, including research conducted by the Healing Foundation and healing projects funded in NSW.

What are our priorities for the next 12 months?

- To continue the dialogue on healing and finalise the collection of feedback through the *OCHRE* Healing Forum's Have your say on-line survey.
- To build relationships established through the *OCHRE* Healing Forum and develop partnerships with government and non-government organisations and Aboriginal communities to support healing.
- To publish the *OCHRE* Healing Forum discussion outcomes report before the end of 2014 and continue the development of a shared understanding about healing, the importance of Aboriginal leadership and the role of government.
- To use evidence and understanding of Aboriginal perspectives emerging from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, and the published literature, to support healing.

What people are saying about Healing ...

“Today represents the first step towards some concrete action on healing, in government policy and program delivery. This is the first state in Australia that has included or incorporated healing into a major Aboriginal affairs policy document.

What our evidence shows is that culture and Aboriginal people themselves, at the core of healing projects, are essential for their success. So projects must be designed, developed and delivered by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people.”

– **Richard Weston**, CEO Healing Foundation, 16 September 2014

“It was a privilege to participate in the Healing Forum and to witness Government taking the first steps towards placing healing for the Aboriginal people of NSW at the heart of its policies and programs.

The Commission promotes a holistic view of Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing as well as being committed to supporting trauma informed healing.

Through our engagement with local Aboriginal communities we are learning how we as a Government agency can respectfully support the healing process and honour the self determination of Aboriginal people.

I am looking forward to the Commission's continued involvement in this healing journey.people.”

– **John Feneley**, NSW Mental Health Commissioner, 4 September 2014



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

Investing in relationships

The NSW Government can't deliver *OCHRE* on its own. *OCHRE*'s success depends on input from everybody; Aboriginal peak bodies and community members, NGOs, all tiers of government, industry peak bodies and research partners. Genuine relationships can only be built by investing the time it takes to develop trust and to map out a shared vision. This requires an ongoing commitment to discussing the issues that really matter to Aboriginal people, and to listening to their views. It also takes patience and maturity. By keeping relationships focused on common, long-term goals, we can avoid being distracted by issues that are not contributing to what *OCHRE* is trying to achieve.

Developing skills

Effective collaboration between government and communities depends on building the skills and knowledge of the many individuals who need to work well together to achieve *OCHRE*'s goals. Communication skills are critical. By listening to, understanding and learning directly from Aboriginal communities, *OCHRE*'s roll out, its ongoing operation and its continuous evaluation and revision can be informed by the people at its heart.

One size does not fit all

Education, employment, language and cultural needs within and across Aboriginal communities are varied and complex. This means many different approaches are needed – not just standard models. By tailoring *OCHRE*'s initiatives to individual local and regional conditions and needs we can lay the foundations for long term success.

Cultural understanding and respect

Deep understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal culture and community protocols is fundamental to *OCHRE*'s success. This must be practiced and expressed unrelentingly to realise *OCHRE*'s commitment to putting Aboriginal people and their communities at the centre of decision making.

Know what works

It is important to learn from both the past and the present. As *OCHRE* is new and commits the government to '*doing things differently*' we have an unprecedented opportunity to work with Aboriginal people and communities as genuine partners, not as the 'subjects' of policies and evaluations of the past. To continuously improve and fine tune *OCHRE* we can learn from the present by using measures of success nominated by Aboriginal communities to assess progress and by feeding back 'lesson learnt' into ongoing programs to achieve real change.

