

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*OCHRE* is the NSW Government plan for Aboriginal affairs. It stands for opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment and is symbolic of Aboriginal communities' deep connection with Country.

*OCHRE* is a response to recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs, the NSW Auditor General and NSW Ombudsman.

The Taskforce was made up of seven Ministers, four Aboriginal community leaders and senior public servants. It looked at how to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in education and employment, service delivery and accountability.

The Taskforce undertook comprehensive consultations last year and received feedback from some 2,700 people across NSW.

### Our aims

- Teach more Aboriginal language and culture to build people's pride and identity.
- Keep more Aboriginal students at school.
- Support more Aboriginal young people to get jobs that are fulfilling and sustainable.
- Grow local Aboriginal leaders' and communities' capacity to drive their own solutions.
- Focus on creating opportunities for economic empowerment.
- Make Government and communities more accountable for the money they spend.

### How will we achieve our aims?

This plan is less about Government and more about Aboriginal people. To achieve our aims, *OCHRE* outlines a number of initiatives including: *Connected Communities*, *Language and Culture Nests*, *Opportunity Hubs*, a *Local Decision Making* model and an *independent Aboriginal Council* chaired by a Coordinator General.

***Connected Communities***, an innovative initiative involving 15 regional schools to drive improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and all students, working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal community members and the broader community. Elements of the *Connected Communities* strategy include:

- Appointing an Executive Principal; a Leader, Community Engagement; community members endorsed locally to teach Aboriginal languages and culture, and the establishment of a local school reference group
- Giving schools unprecedented authority to tailor education to meet students' needs and aspirations through exploring a range of targeted, integrated services from birth, through schools, to further training and employment



- Having Executive Principals collaborate with parents, local governance groups and school communities to make decisions that are flexible and innovative which reflect the local context while allocating and aligning resources to meet needs and aspirations of students.

**Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests** will create learning pathways for Aboriginal students, teachers and community members by:

- Increasing the number of language learners and teachers in schools and communities so that Aboriginal languages are used and preserved
- Coordinating learning and teaching options by linking communities, schools, TAFEs and universities
- Further developing a language curriculum in partnership with the local Aboriginal community and the Board of Studies, to ensure the learning pathway is complete from pre-school to tertiary education
- Better supporting and recognising Elders and Aboriginal community members who are community language teachers
- Engaging Aboriginal students' families in language learning and teaching.

**Opportunity Hubs** will provide Aboriginal students with clear pathways to real jobs by:

- Partnering schools with local employers and training providers
- Coordinating local opportunities including employment, mentoring, scholarships, internships and volunteer work
- Matching local opportunities to Aboriginal students' career aspirations that lead to jobs
- Mentoring and supporting Aboriginal students each step of the way
- Engaging Aboriginal students and their families early on at school
- Tracking Aboriginal students' progress including once they have transitioned to employment.

**Local Decision Making** will build the capacity of Aboriginal communities to make decisions about their own futures by:

- Giving Aboriginal communities a genuine voice in influencing how and what services are delivered
- Empowering Aboriginal communities by investing in building governance and leadership capabilities
- Providing incentives to grow by increasing communities' decision making power based on evidence of capacity and success.

**Stronger accountability** will make Government and community more accountable by:

- Legislating for an *independent Aboriginal Council* and Coordinator General. The Council will:
  - Monitor and report on Government progress to Parliament
  - Advise Government on strategic issues relating to Aboriginal affairs
  - Work with Aboriginal communities to create meaningful targets
  - Have a core membership of five Aboriginal people based on skills and expertise, with the option to second additional experts
- The *Coordinator General* will:
  - Chair the *independent Aboriginal Council*
  - Broker cross-agency solutions
  - Obtain information from Government agencies to assist the Council in assessing government performance
  - Report periodically to the Minister.

The way the initiatives are implemented will be vital to their success, which is why they will be initially rolled out in selected locations, evaluated regularly to build the evidence base and delivered in partnership with community. Evaluation of the initiatives will be used to support future rollout.