

# OCHRE

## APPROACH TO EVALUATION



*Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment*



# OCHRE

stands for:



## CONTENTS

Minister's foreword	3
General Manager's message	4
Introduction	5
Purpose of the document	5
How <i>OCHRE</i> is governed	6
A commitment to evaluation	7
Our evaluation framework	8
What will be evaluated and when	9
Who will undertake the evaluation	9
What guides the evaluation	10
Values	10
Standards	11
How are we getting ready to evaluate	11
Next steps	13
Want to know more?	13

@December, 2015

## MINISTER'S FOREWORD



*OCHRE*: the NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal affairs was announced in April 2013. It's a plan which has paved the way for a new approach to Aboriginal affairs in NSW – one in which the NSW Government and Aboriginal communities have worked in partnership to develop and implement programs and initiatives.

Under *OCHRE*, a new Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs), will support the Ombudsman to provide independent monitoring and assessment of *OCHRE* through reports to Parliament.

An integral part of accountability is evaluation. I am therefore pleased to provide this overarching plan for the evaluation and assessment of *OCHRE* programs – entitled *OCHRE – Approach to Evaluation*.

This document is intended to sit above the Monitoring Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement framework (MERI) which will provide detailed, individual evaluation plans for specified initiatives under *OCHRE* (being Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests, Industry Based Agreements, Opportunity Hubs, and Local Decision Making).

As I have said on many occasions, there are no quick fixes. *OCHRE* is a plan to drive generational change, with education and employment at its heart. But generational change also requires independent scrutiny and accountability.

Through regular monitoring and evaluation we are now in a far stronger position to identify any shortcomings within *OCHRE* programs which may impact on our ability to deliver on their intended long-term outcomes.

With regular reports and evaluation we are able to make timely adjustments to programs to ensure they are delivering the intended outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

We want to deliver sustainable, evidence-based programs, tailored to the needs and aspirations of local communities, which can grow and expand organically across the State.

– Victor Dominello MP  
Minister for Citizenship and Communities  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Assistant Minister for Education

## GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Through *OCHRE*, Aboriginal Affairs has committed itself to a different way of working with, and in support of, Aboriginal communities. We are building strong working partnerships that have at their heart, respect for local Aboriginal culture, leadership and decision-making.

Through these partnerships, and the conversations that have ensued, greater accountability for outcomes that are meaningful to Aboriginal communities has been a consistent theme.

In response, we are developing evaluations plans for key *OCHRE* initiatives that articulate what success looks like for Aboriginal communities, and how this success will be assessed and measured.

As we look ahead to implementing these plans, new challenges emerge that can shake the foundations we have built. An evaluation approach that keeps ethical relationships front and centre will keep us in check as this new way of working is embedded. For us, ethical relationships include maintaining a strong focus on self-determination.

There are so many examples of where evaluation, rather than assisting Aboriginal communities, has been counterproductive. This is because control was taken from the communities, the data collected was not fit for purpose, or the data was interpreted in isolation and without regard to life of the communities.

High quality participatory practice is the centrepiece of the evaluation approach we are taking with *OCHRE*. This approach will ensure that our evaluation practice is culturally sensitive, non-exploitative and respects the integrity of each Aboriginal community we are working with. In addition, it supports the collection of high quality information so that each community can improve their local initiatives, allowing them to flourish. Above all else, the evaluations need to be useful for those communities.

We don't expect this to be an easy path because it is not straightforward and it challenges the existing power relationships. However, changing relationships is what *OCHRE* is fundamentally about.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Ardler'.

– Mr Jason Ardler  
General Manager  
Aboriginal Affairs

## Introduction

### “Communities are over-serviced yet under-delivered”

– *Aboriginal community member from the 2013 Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs consultations*

*OCHRE* is the NSW Government's Plan for Aboriginal affairs in NSW. It aims to support strong Aboriginal communities in which Aboriginal people actively influence and fully participate in social, economic and cultural life. Its major areas of focus include education and employment, language and culture, governance and accountability.

It comprises the following initiatives:

- Healing
- Connected Communities – operating in 15 locations
- Aboriginal Economic Development Framework
- Opportunity Hubs – operating in 4 locations
- Industry-Based Agreements – 3 state-wide Agreements have been signed
- Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests – operating in 5 locations
- Local Decision Making – operating in 5 locations
- Solution Brokerage.

Information about *OCHRE* initiatives can be found [here](#).

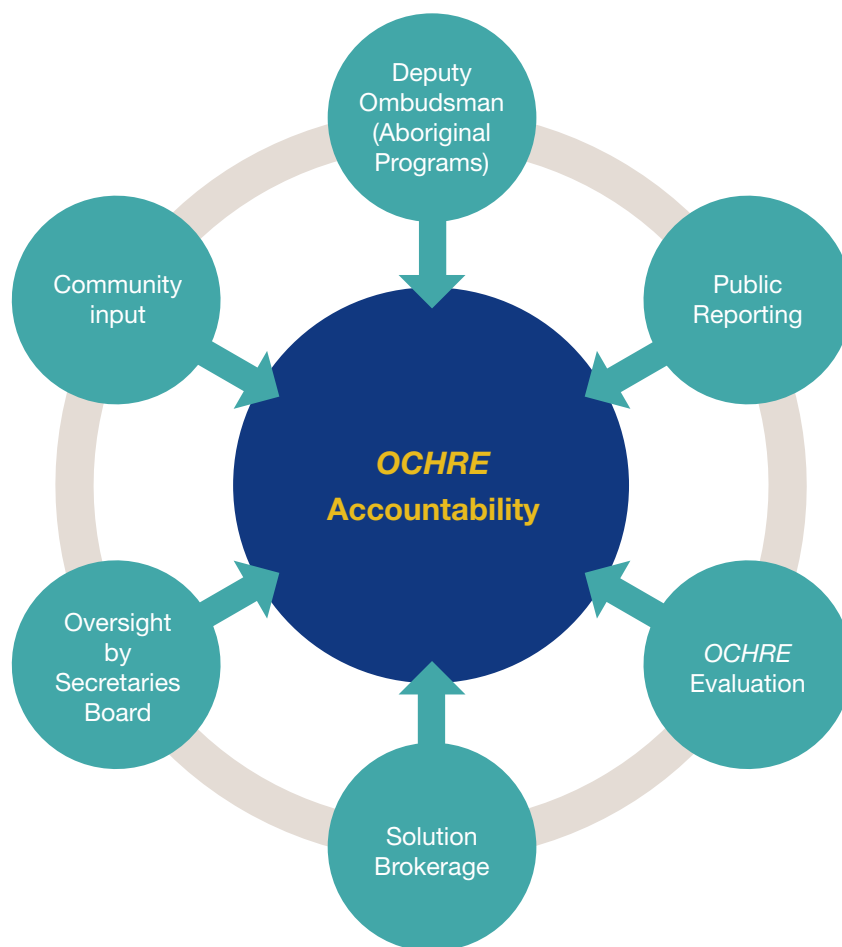
## Purpose of the document

This document provides high level information on *OCHRE*'s approach to evaluation, progress to date and next steps. The document does not include the individual plans for each initiative which will be released in the second half of 2015.

## How OCHRE is governed

The evaluation of *OUCHRE* forms part of a robust accountability framework that has been developed in response to community feedback – *Figure 1*.

**Figure 1 – A strong focus on accountability**



In addition to evaluation, the accountability framework includes:

- **Secretaries Board oversight:** the Secretaries Board, a forum made up of the Secretaries of every NSW Government Department, has ultimate oversight over the implementation of *OUCHRE* and receives six monthly reports on its progress from project managers.
- **Independent monitoring and assessment:** legislation was passed through Parliament in 2014 to amend the *Ombudsman Act 1974* to create a Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) to monitor and assess Aboriginal programs. The first Aboriginal program to be listed in the Regulation of that Act is *OUCHRE*. The Deputy Ombudsman will be able to make independent recommendations about the implementation of *OUCHRE* along the way so that issues are identified and resolved early. This function will complement rather than duplicate other

mechanisms. The findings from the evaluations of the *OCHRE* initiatives will provide an important source of evidence that the Deputy Ombudsman will draw on to independently monitor and assess the implementation of *OCHRE*.

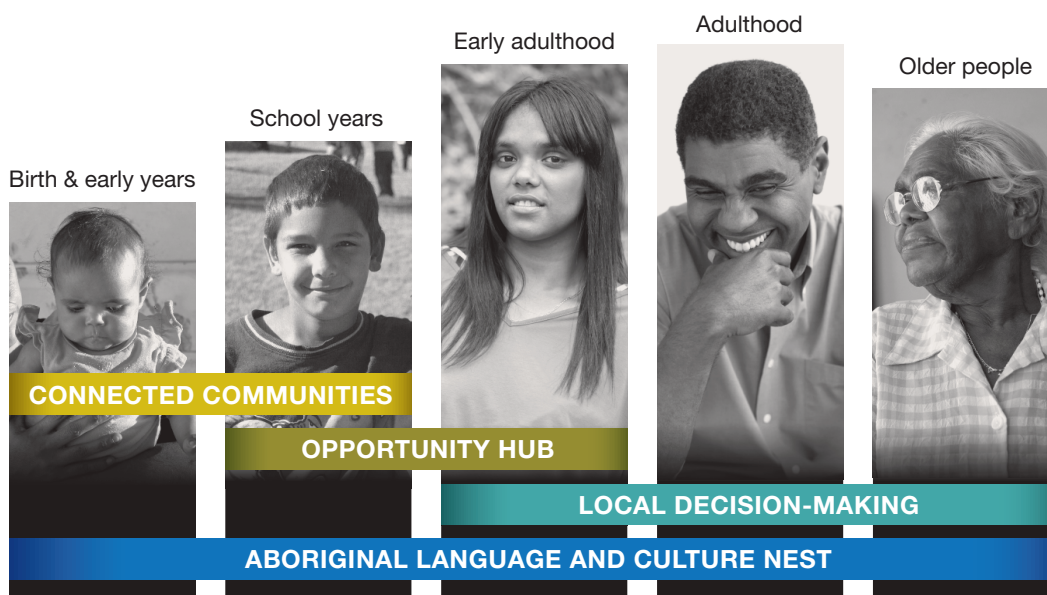
- **Public reporting:** an annual report on the progress of implementation is tabled in Parliament. The first report, *OCHRE: One year on* was published in 2014 and can be found [here](#).
- **Solution brokerage:** Aboriginal Affairs has a role in delivering whole-of-government solutions in response to local, regional and state-wide issues that are impacting on Aboriginal people and communities. Under *OCHRE*, Aboriginal Affairs can act as a solution broker across the NSW Government to improve co-ordination, resolve issues, reduce duplication and achieve the best possible outcomes.
- **Community input:** *OCHRE* publically commits the NSW Government to ensuring that Aboriginal people are involved in the planning, design and evaluation of *OCHRE*.

### A commitment to evaluation

Evaluation will ensure that the key *OCHRE* initiatives drive generational change – *Figure 2*.

*OCHRE* is underpinned by a commitment to on-going partnerships and to tracking and measuring success. Monitoring and evaluation is built into the implementation and operation of the key initiatives. This provides the feedback needed to inform continuous improvements across the life of a program and to build a strong evidence base to improve *OCHRE*'s effectiveness and outcomes into the future. This 'learning by doing' approach is important given the new and innovative nature of the initiatives.

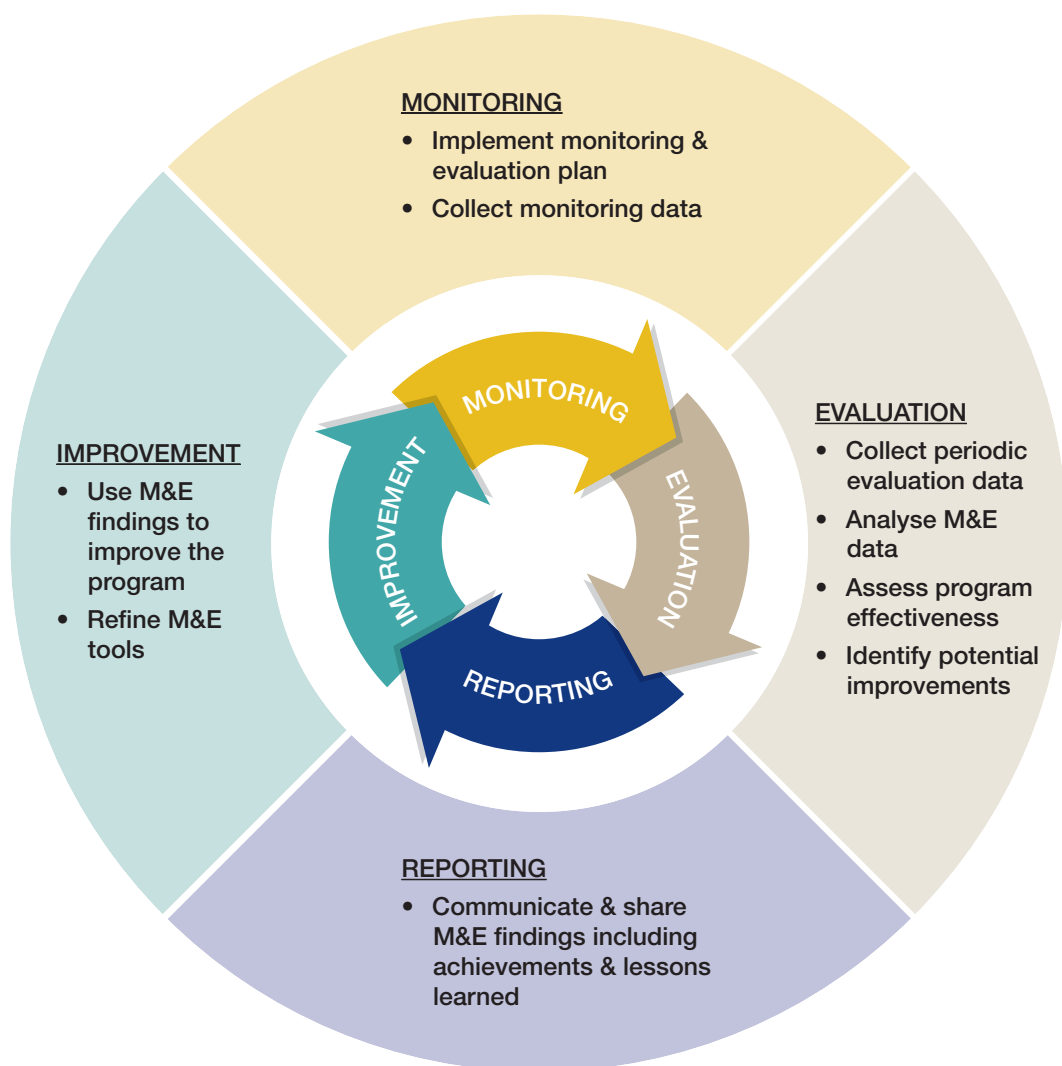
**Figure 2 – *OCHRE* supports generational change**



**Our evaluation framework**

The evaluation will be cyclical and ongoing to monitor the implementation of the key initiatives and to evaluate impacts against short and long term goals – *Figure 3*.

**Figure 3 – Cyclical approach to evaluation**





## What will be evaluated and when

The NSW Government is committed to localisation under *OCHRE*. This means that *OCHRE* initiatives only commence in a location after a period of consultation and at a time Aboriginal communities determine is appropriate.

This means different locations have initiatives that commence, develop and mature at different times. The timing of the process, outcome and impact evaluation will differ accordingly.

The real impact of any initiative can only be determined over the long term. In the interim:

- The **process** evaluation will investigate the way the initiative has been implemented (such as the activities conducted and the number of participants attending events). It will assess whether activities are being implemented as intended and identify those aspects of the program that are working well and those that could be improved to inform future changes. It is anticipated this evaluation will be completed for most initiatives in 2017/18.
- The **outcome** evaluation will determine whether each initiative is achieving what it set out to do. It will identify and assess the changes experienced by participants and key stakeholders following their involvement. It is anticipated this evaluation will be completed for most initiatives in 2020/21.
- The **impact** evaluation will measure the contribution of each initiative to meeting its long-term goals. It is anticipated this evaluation will be completed for most initiatives in 2023/24.

Information used to measure the success of each initiative through its various phases will be detailed within individual evaluation plans.

## Who will undertake the evaluation

Each initiative has its own evaluation plan. The Connected Communities initiative will be evaluated by the Department of Education and Communities' Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE). CESE has been established within the department to evaluate education-specific initiatives.

The evaluation of the Opportunity Hub, Industry-Based Agreement, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest and Local Decision Making initiatives will be contracted externally and information about the tender process will be made publicly available.

The Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) will monitor and assess the implementation of *OCHRE* to determine the effectiveness of initiatives in driving positive change for Aboriginal people and communities. As part of this monitoring and assessment, the Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) will take the evaluation of individual initiatives into account.

### What guides the evaluation

There are ongoing concerns about the quality, relevance and processes of much of the research and evaluation undertaken with Aboriginal people. Critics within and outside Aboriginal communities have variously labelled such investigations as invasive, unsuitable and pointless, and have highlighted a lack of consultation and informed consent.

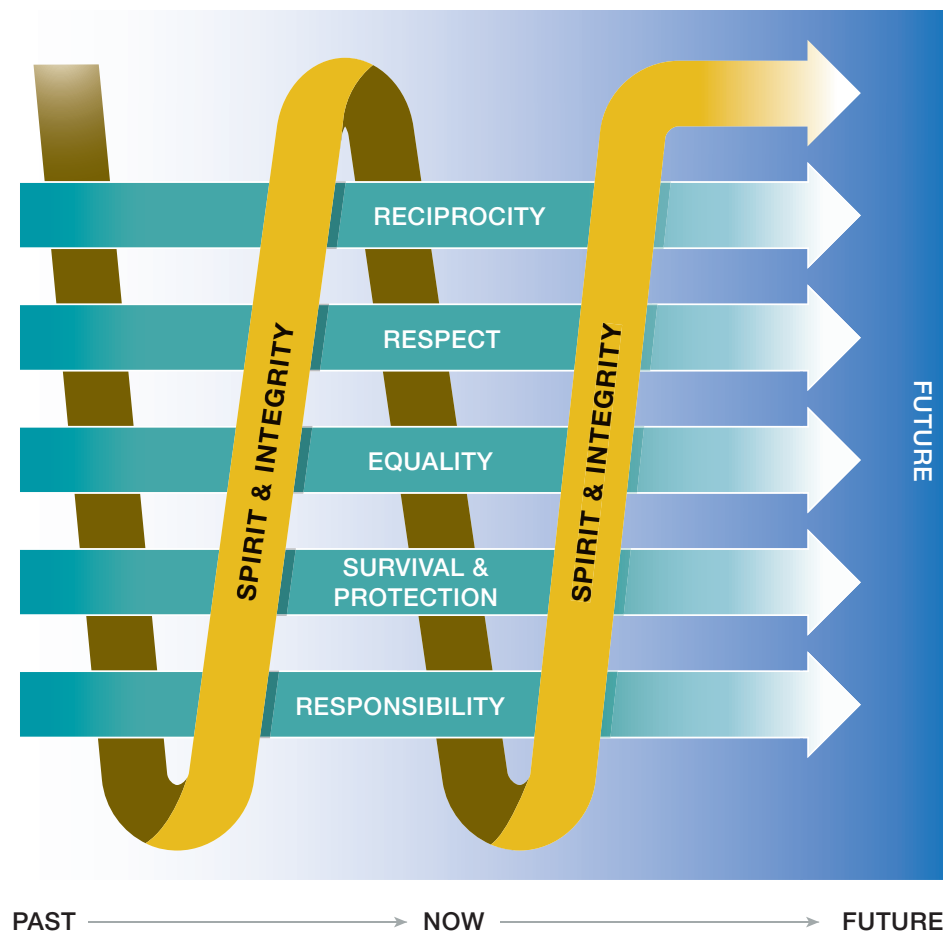
The evaluation of the *OCHRE* initiatives will be conducted according to the values and ethics identified in guidelines for research with Aboriginal people and the standards outlined in the *NSW Department of Education and Communities' Evaluation Framework* (January 2014).

### Values

Values include Spirit and Integrity, Reciprocity, Respect, Equality, Survival and Protection, and Responsibility – *Figure 4*. To ensure compliance with these values the evaluation of the Opportunity Hubs, Industry-Based Agreements, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests and Local Decision Making initiatives will be subject to Ethics Committee approval.

**Figure 4 – Evaluation values**

*Based on material provided by the National Health and Medical Research Council.*



## Standards

Standards include early planning; clear aims; appropriate resourcing; rigorous, systematic and objective methodology; the right mix of expertise and independence; the active involvement of the right stakeholders; timeliness; and a strategic, transparent and open approach. The Framework can be found [here](#).

An expert advisory group with specialist knowledge and skills will be established to provide guidance and ensure compliance with these values and standards.

## How are we getting ready to evaluate

There are a number of steps in the development of evaluation plans, some of which are being undertaken concurrently. These include:

1. Consulting with communities and building community knowledge about the evaluation
2. Developing the roadmap
3. Validating and finalising the evaluation plans.

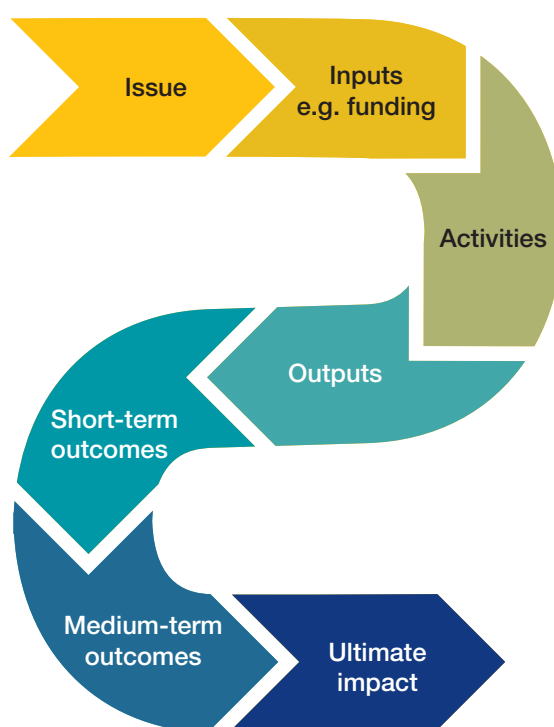
The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) has been engaged to prepare evaluation plans for the Opportunity Hubs, Industry-Based Agreements, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests and Local Decision Making initiatives. The plans are currently being developed.

Further information about CIRCA can be found [here](#).



A key aspect of evaluation planning has been to clarify how the four initiatives will operate and intersect with each other - as well as with Connected Communities - to produce the expected outcomes. By understanding this interaction, evaluations will be able to establish the links between the investments made and the results achieved by the initiatives – *Figure 5*.

**Figure 5 – A roadmap approach**



This “roadmap” approach recognises that implementing and running any initiative is complex – and that change is constant. These changes may include external factors such as shifts in the job market, education policy and practice which are beyond the control of the initiatives. Consequently, evaluation plans and measures of success will be flexible so that they can respond appropriately. The development of the roadmap will pay particular attention to what information is collected and how.

Prior to being finalised the plans will be reviewed by key stakeholders to ensure they are achievable and fit for purpose.

## Next steps

To ensure evaluation plans are vested in Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Affairs is currently seeking feedback from Aboriginal people and other key stakeholders involved with *OCHRE*. We will also be consulting with evaluation and methodological experts to ensure our approach is achievable. Following agreement from key stakeholders, the department will call for tenders in the second half of 2015 for external contractors to carry out the evaluations of the individual initiatives (excluding Connected Communities).

Evaluation reports will be produced in the future detailing short and long term outcomes and lessons learned. All evaluations will be released publicly and made available to community, NGO and industry partners and NSW Government agencies. Communication planning is now underway to ensure that this information is disseminated as widely as possible.

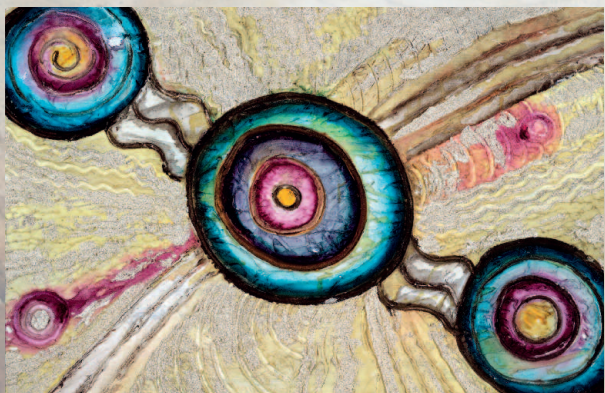
Information on progress to date in relation to the Connected Communities initiative is available [here](#).

Information on the evaluation of the other four initiatives is available [here](#).

## Want to know more?

If you are from one of the communities where an *OCHRE* initiative is being implemented and are interested in knowing more about evaluation, please feel free to ring (02) 9219 0700.

If you are an evaluation company interested in tendering for future work related to Opportunity Hubs, Industry-Based Agreements, Aboriginal Language and Culture Nests and Local Decision Making initiatives please register your interest at [ochre@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ochre@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au).



#### ARTIST RECOGNITION (COVER)

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 Yuladarah, 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.

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